

# The Book of Genesis

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

## External Links

[HTML of Genesis Chapter Links](#)

[PDF of Genesis Chapter Links](#)

[WPD of Genesis Chapter Links](#)

The following chapters of Genesis have been recently “completed.” A full, word-by-word exegesis from the Hebrew is given, along with all of the information contained in the above lessons. What I have not yet done is gone back, edited out material which is repeated, and added in material from some other sources. However, what you will find in the exegesis of each chapter is the most thorough examination of these chapters available anywhere. The links below are external links:

**The Updated and Improved Genesis Chapters;** Grouped Links to Updated and Improved Genesis Chapters.

**Genesis Introduction** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

This relatively short document introduces the book of Genesis. Included in the topics are Progressive Revelation, Inspiration, the correct view of the Authorship of Genesis (which includes a short exegetical study of New Testament passages to substantiate this), along with the Themes of Genesis and a few summaries of the book of Genesis.

**Genesis 1** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis is a most amazing book. There is no ancient book like this. What other ancient book coincides with the Big Bang Theory? What ancient book suggests there was a great ice age over all the earth? As you will find in this study, there are places where the Book of Genesis disagrees with some scientific theories, but Genesis is definitely not anti-science.

God speaks throughout this chapter—who is He speaking to and for what reason? Is God unable to create everything perfectly just the way He wants it? Then why does God take 6 days to restore the earth?

Doctrines included in this study: **Ancient Creation Myths; The Order of Creation; Creation Verbs; God and Light and Darkness; The Angelic Conflict; Genesis Creation Theories; How Light Illustrates the Trinity; Light on Day One, the Sun on Day Four; Evolution, Creationism and Divine Design; Some Arguments Against Evolution; A New Theory of Creation and Restoration; Creation Theories; What is God Teaching the Angels?; We Are the Shadow-Image of God.**

As in all chapter studies, every single word of Hebrew is found in Genesis 1, along with 50 or so translations for each and every verse. 239 pages.

## **Genesis 2** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 2 goes back and takes a look at day 6 and what happened after day 6, when God built the woman. Although some critics try to present this as an alternate creation narrative, what we have here is simply a closer look at Day 6 and what followed. Hebrew writers often do this; they state an historic event or something, and then they go back and discuss this event in greater detail.

We cover a number of special topics here: the **Sabbath, Sanctification, The Tree of Life; The Tree of Knowing Good and Evil, Timelines for the creation of the man and the woman, and the First Four Divine Institutions.**

In this chapter is a very important doctrine here for apologists is **Ten Amazing Statements from Genesis 1:1-2:7.** What we learn from the first chapter and a half of Genesis are amazing things not found in any other creation story. These are significant enough to show that believing in the Bible is not somehow anti-science. Also fascinating is the Chiasm found in Gen. 2:4–25. 154 pages.

## **Genesis 3** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 3 is all about the fall of the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden. Satan plays a prominent role, so we examine Satan, Satan's Fall, Satan's appearance, the role of the cherubim, and this portion of the Angelic Conflict.

This study includes the doctrines of **The Basis of Satan's Appeals, Human Good, Morality, Truth and Lies, The Seed of the Woman, Scar Tissue, and Atonement.** Also in this study: **What the Bible Claims for Itself and The Historicity of Adam, the Woman and the Fall.** 214 pages.

## **Genesis 4** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 4 is all about Cain and Abel, and the killing of Abel by Cain. There are two verses in this chapter which are invariably mistranslated; and one mistranslation leads to all kinds of sloppy interpretation. One of these verses is Gen. 4:7 (God is speaking to Cain) "[Is \[it\] not \[true that\], if you do good, \[there is\] a lifting up \[of your countenance\]; and if you do not do good, \[then\] the penalty \[for sin\] is lying in wait at the door. And to you \[is\] his desire and you \[even\] you will have dominion over him.](#)" It is impossible for this to be interpreted as Cain having the ability to have dominion over sin. The Hebrew will not allow for that interpretation. In this study, there will be 2 explanations given for what God is saying to Cain. Like Gen. 1-3, this is a word-by-word examination of Gen. 4, with the intent that you understand nearly every word in this chapter. Although this exegesis still requires some polish, at 170 pages, it should be the most in-depth study available.

Included in this study is **The Concept of Religion Comes from Cain; How to Distinguish Christianity from Cults; Jesus Christ is the Only Way to God; Cainian Parallels; The Canian population after 100 years** (you will be surprised); **Why Man Had Tools Early on; What Eve's Words Tell Us; and The Genealogy of Jesus Christ.** Because there are some obvious textual difficulties in this chapter, we will take a look at the most prominent ancient translations of the Old Testament (and the concept of families of manuscripts will be discussed). There are several topics discussed throughout. For instance, if a person joins a cult or a movement, and that person stops taking drugs, develops a more legitimate and independent lifestyle, isn't that good enough? Why does he need to be a Christian if he solves many of his problems? Human works and why they are so repulsive to God (with a very good illustration). How exactly Cain murdered Abel. The mark of Cain, which has been discussed for millenarian. Why is Cain banished and not executed? There are modern-day illustrations and applications, such as, science and DDT; Wall Street and greed; my surprise as a young Christian not being able to simply go out and easily find a church that taught the Bible carefully and accurately; and the profound enjoyment one can get from one's profession. 170 pages.

## **Genesis 5** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 5 is a genealogy chapter, the first chapter devoted almost entirely to the genealogy of Adam to Noah.

For this reason, some would think this chapter could be skipped over, or skim-read in 2 minutes, and be dispensed with. However, this chapter should not be skipped if only to see that gospel message which is found within its pages. It is one of the many chapters which will confirm that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

Some of the topics discussed are the longevity of those found in Gen. 5 (the lives of those in the antediluvian civilization were typically 900+ years); the various authors of Genesis; the gospel message of Genesis 5; and the timeline set by the Bible.

This study includes; **Why Did God the Holy Spirit Record Gen. 5, a Genealogy?**; the **Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Genealogy of Gen. 5** and the **Timeline Set up by the Bible**. 122 pages.

## **Genesis 6 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).**

Gen. 6 is a very unusual chapter. Fallen angels will have the ability to have sexual unions with the daughters of men, and they will produce children who are characters of mythology that many of us have studied over the years (the half-man/half-god characters).

However, this completely pollutes the human race, and God selects seemingly the only people who remain who have not been corrupted, Noah, his wife, his 3 sons and their wives.

There are several things which we find in this chapter: a pronouncement of judgement against the corrupted human race and a promise of their destruction. God will make a covenant with Noah, which is the first mention of a covenant in Scripture. God will also instruct Noah to build an ark.

You may think that this is all just a story, a myth that was passed along for centuries. However, you are going to find out that this historical record is anything other than a myth; it is clearly not devised by someone who thought it would make a great story.

You may be surprised as to how many things in this chapter are interdependent and dependent upon the previous chapters in Genesis. For instance, in order for this to actually have taken place, there had to be an environment much different than we have today. We could not have rain; and we could not have an abundance of bacteria; otherwise, the wood of the ark would have rotted before it took its maiden voyage. And, not surprisingly, this is exactly the sort of environment that previous chapters of Genesis suggests.

This examination of Gen. 6 includes: **Biblical States of the Earth**; the **Accuracy of the Old Testament**; the **Basic Mechanics of the Christian Life**; and the doctrines of **Satan's Counterfeits, Sanctification, Civilizations and Anthropopathisms**. 192 pages.

## **Genesis 7 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).**

Gen. 7 contains God's instructions to Noah as to what he would need to take on board with his family on the ark, and is followed by the actual entering into the ark and then the flood itself.

Because people are aware that there are other flood records out there, and that some people believe that this flood account in Genesis is allegorical or exaggerated or not what Christians have made it out to be, careful attention is given to some of the other flood stories which exist, and how they line up with the record of the Great Deluge in the Bible. Also, as was done in Gen. 6, some time is spend with looking at this topic scientifically, looking at some extra-Biblical sources, and showing that the Bible record is straightforward and reasonable.

One topic which was not covered here, but will be covered in Gen. 8 is the idea that there are two flood accounts which have been woven together. This does appear to be a possibility, not because of the so-called JPED theory, but because there is a lot of repetition in this particular chapter, even though it is only 24 verses long.

Some of the special topics include: **The Flood Timetable**; the **Different Environments of the Earth as Suggested by the Bible**; Robbie Dean's explanation as to why this was a worldwide flood; **Fossil Evidence for**

**Massive Graveyards**; and several comparisons of the Genesis record of the flood with other flood accounts from other cultures (with an emphasis upon the Gilgamesh account). 137 pages.

## **Genesis 8** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 8 is about the second half of the flood, where the waters begin to subside to a point where Noah and his family and the animals are able to exit the ark. The person who recorded this information in the first place continues to keep us abreast of the days and the time of the month that these various events take place.

Included in this study is the **Omniscient of God**, the **Priesthoods of the Bible**, several **Flood Timetables** and a **chiasm** organization of Gen. 7–8. One of the fascinating aspects of the flood narrative is how it is organized. Gen. 7–8 can be combined into a **chiasm** format, which is quite amazing (and something which often occurs in the Bible). More than likely, you will have to see this and read it in order to fully appreciate it.

Finally, there is some discussion of how the flood may be related to continental drift and to the skewing of the earth's axis.

## **Genesis 9** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In Gen. 9, Noah and his family exit the ark to the new world devastated by worldwide flood waters. God makes a covenant (contract with Noah). At the end of this chapter, Noah will get drunk, and the way that his sons react to this will determine the general trends of history among the progeny of Noah's sons.

Included in this study of Gen. 9 is: The **Doctrine of Murder**; A Comparison of **Dispensationalism** and **Covenant Theology**; the **Noahic Covenant**; and the **Breakdown of Races** to come from Noah's sons (as per R. B. Thieme, Jr.).

Although I do intend to go back and edit this document at a future date, it includes a breakdown of every Hebrew word in this chapter accompanied by samples of over 50 translations, and is the most thorough examination of this chapter of Genesis anywhere. 154 pages.

## **Genesis 10** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Many people skip all of Gen. 10 and a portion of Gen. 11 because these are genealogy chapters, but there is a lot to be learned in this chapter (you may recall that the gospel of Jesus Christ is hidden in the genealogy of Gen. 5—from Adam to Noah). Every believer ought to learn something about the genealogies found in the Bible.

It is worth noting that, some author did not suddenly say, "Oh, let's throw in some genealogies here." Their inclusion at this point is logical and actually fits well with the narrative.

One of the most amazing things is, there are perhaps a half-dozen authors of the Bible who continue the linear (straight-line) genealogy all the way from Adam to Jesus Christ. Somehow, all of these authors knew that, there is one genealogy of promise, and it is included in the Bible (there are no other linear genealogies found). It is worth asking, *how did they know?* And how did they know *not* to follow out some of the genealogical lines, like those for Moses, Aaron, Caleb, Samuel or Saul?

Some of the doctrines found in this chapter: What is the Purpose of the Bible, the Doctrine of Toledoth, several maps and alternate ways to show the distribution of the peoples of the earth; the 5 Divine Institutions; Attacks on the Divine Institutions.

This is a great study and highly recommended. 149 pages.

## **Genesis 11** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 11 is another amazing, yet often ignored, chapter in the Bible. People are aware of the first half of Gen. 11, which is the Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Languages, but then, the second section follows the line of Shem. This portion is equally important, as are the final few verses, which describe the family of Terah. Those who read the Bible through on some kind of a schedule often speed-read through the final section of this chapter, and they miss how this sets up Gen. 12 and the call of Abram.

According to at least 2 sources, there does appear to be a three-fold breakdown of the languages, which is in agreement with the 3 clans at that time. There will be several sections in this study which deal with archeology and carbon dating and the theories of the age of mankind. The scientific achievements of the people of Ham are listed here, and you will find this to be quite amazing. Ancient man and his primitive ways will not longer seem very primitive to you. There are two kinds of genealogies found in the Bible and these will be explained. We will study the kinds of ancient manuscripts of the Bible which are available to us today. The decline in the ages of the patriarchs will be examined, because they decrease exponentially, which is quite an amazing little detail. Finally, some attention will be paid to the route of Abraham and his family, along with something that I doubt you have heard before—the idea that Abraham was called on two occasions. Also included, and possibly exclusively found here, why Abraham and his descendants are called Hebrews (there are actually several reasons for this).

Included are the following short doctrines: The Assumptions of Archeology and Paleontology, C-14 Dating and Accuracy, Scientific Achievements of Ancient Hamitic Peoples; Types of Genealogies Found in the Bible; Explaining the Age Decline; When did the flood occur?; Ancient Manuscripts of the Bible; Transitional Point in the Book of Genesis; The Two Calls to Abram.

A fascinating study and highly recommended. 175 pages.

## **Genesis 12** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 12 is the call of Abram (Abraham), his move to Canaan, his travels through Canaan, and then his misstep of going to Egypt. Gen. 12 marks a transition point in the book of Genesis, as we suddenly focus in on one man and his life. We have studied individuals in the previous 11 chapters, but with Gen. 12, there is a sudden focus and concentration which was not found before. Interestingly enough, Abram (Abraham is not his name yet) is claimed by at least 3 different religions, but, in this study, you will begin to get a feel for the man and his thinking, as well as for his misjudgment.

We will study God's promise to Abram, "[I will bless those who bless you; and curse those who curse you;](#)" and study a great many ancient and modern examples of this. This will lead us to the precarious position that the United States is in today. In Charan, it will be apparent that Abram and his family were successful; but this was outside of God's geographic will for Abram. He will be blessed even more greatly in Canaan, the Land of Promise.

God appears twice to Abram, and we will study the concept of Theophanies and Christophanies in the Old Testament. We will study the subtlety of the Bible, as many people view the Bible as a book that beats individuals over the head with their own personal sins.

There are many doctrines which are studied in this chapter:

There are many doctrines which are studied in this chapter: How God Would Bless Abram; Should Abram have taken Lot with Him?; The Doctrine of Theophanies; Categories of Passages with a Double Meaning; The Doctrine of the Will of God; Abram and the Geographic Will of God; The Doctrine of Faith-Rest; The Goals of Communism in America; The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Laws of Divine Establishment; and Parallels to the Exodus.

This should be a study of greater depth of this chapter than you have seen anywhere else. 169 pages.

## **Genesis 13** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In Gen. 13, Abram and his crew return from Egypt, oddly richer than before, despite Abram's deception. Lot is

still with Abram, but because of the abundance of their riches, Abram suggests to Lot that they should separate, Lot being given the first choice of which direction to go in.

After this separation, God comes to Abram and fills him in on more of His promises to Abram. God then tells Abram to continue wandering throughout the land, which Abram begins doing.

There are a great many doctrines covered in this chapter, including the **Doctrine of Separation**, the **Concept of Blessing by Association**, the **Doctrine of Logistical Grace**, the **Doctrine of Antisemitism**, and several doctrines on Dispensations and intercalation. I, like many Bible exegetes, take the Bible literally. However, there are many **figures of speech** found throughout Scripture, and several of the more notable ones will be highlighted here with examples.

Also included in this study is an American Heritage Special, because the history of the United States which I was taught in high school and college was inaccurate and intentionally so. Not necessarily by my teachers, but by those who wrote the texts and distorted who our founders really were. In this section, we will read a proclamation by George Washington, the preambles of several state constitutions, and the words of many founding fathers. Our founding fathers are not deists nor did they write the constitution in order to limit the religious speech of government officials. When reading their own words, this will become plain. We will also take a brief look at the Warren Court and how they changed the vocabulary just enough to begin to use the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to limit free speech rather than to preserve it. It is a fascinating study.

All in all, there is a lot of important information for the believer in Jesus Christ in this chapter and a great deal of application. 182 pages.

## **Genesis 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 14 is a fascinating study, thought by some to be an odd insertion in the Bible. However, once you read this, you will see just how important this chapter is to the narrative of Genesis, and how it plants more seeds for further doctrines.

The Bible is a book which includes the strategy and tactics of various armies, and that is something that we find in this chapter. You may not recognize what is going on by a simple read-through, but exactly what these armies do is clearly laid out. We also study the stages of national discipline here, laid out in the Bible for the first time. The false JEPD theory (documentary hypothesis) is alluded to in this chapter, along with links to where this false theory is explained. Imperialism, which is given a bad name today, will be studied in relationship to Gen. 14. British imperialism was a good thing; it was not evil. Furthermore, what the United States does today is *not* imperialism. We will note that the Bible is not anti-wealth, and not every wealthy man in the Bible is told to sell everything that he has and give it to the poor. There will be a link to a list of the wealthy men found in Scripture, none of whom had done wrong by being wealthy. We will look at the brilliance of United States policy after WWII and the great failure of George W. Bush in Iraq and Afghanistan (you have not heard this from a Biblical perspective before, I can almost guarantee you).

Included in the doctrines are the Strategy and Tactics of the Kings of the East; the Melchizedek Special; the Priesthoods of God; the Doctrine of Redemption; the Slave Market of Sin; and, very importantly, all the Seeds of Theology found in Genesis 1–14. Progressive Revelation, Tithing, and the Stages of National Discipline are also doctrines which are covered in this chapter.

This is truly one of the great chapters of the Bible. 217 pages.

## **Genesis 15** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 15 is a very unusual chapter of the Bible. Twice, Abram is said to be communicating with God when in a trance state; but there seem to be a variety of real activities related to these communications which take place as

well. There is a great deal of prophecy in this chapter, where God helps Abram to look forward into time, to see what God will bring to pass.

Also in this chapter is the clear statement of Old Testament salvation: [And Abram had believed in the Lord and it is credited to him as righteousness](#). This verse is quoted 5 times in the New Testament, but each time with a slightly different emphasis (all quotations will be studied in Gen. 15).

The doctrines studied in this chapter will include Four Generation Degeneracy, with a modern example of it; Abram and the large numbers associated with him; and an argument in favor of the less-than-literal Bibles.

There are two doctrines studied at the end of this chapter which I believe are extremely important. The first is the “Lucky Guesses in Genesis 1–15.” These are 20 or so things which are amazing that anyone would have, at anytime in ancient history, recorded these things. The Bible speaks of cloning, of the Big Bang Theory and of the chemical composition of man; as well as about the atmosphere—things which make perfect sense today, and things which were found thousands of years before their discovery in the first 15 chapters of Genesis. There are also a number of very sophisticated theological concepts found in the first 15 chapters of Genesis, which, if this were not the Word of God, we should not expect to find such things.

People have a lot of misconceptions about the Bible itself. They think that the Catholic Church or this or that group snuck in and changed the Bible to conform to all of its theories. Others think that there have been so many translations of translations made of the Bible that there is no way possible to know what it said originally. Others think that, somehow, the prophecies were written after the prophecies had come to pass. All of these ideas are silly; and having some real understanding of the history of the Bible shows these ideas to be false. This is one of the final doctrines found in Gen. 15. 162 pages.

## **Genesis 16** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 16 is the story of the birth of Ishmael, the father of many Arab groups who are alive today. Sarai, who obviously knew of the promises that God made to Abram, suggested that her personal maidservant, the Egyptian girl Hagar, function as a surrogate mother, through whom Abram would father a son, and, in this way, help God fulfill His promises to Abram. What happened instead was great discord in the Abram household, where Sarai and Hagar could not be reconciled, and Hagar ran off. God went and found Hagar, and asked her to return to Abram’s compound, telling her that He would multiply her seed greatly.

This is the first appearance of the Angel of the Lord in the Bible (that is, the first time He is given this name). The Angel of the Lord is the Revealed God and this will be shown clearly by **the doctrine of the Angel of the Lord**.

We also look at **the Doctrine of Slavery** and applications of that doctrine to today. This is an unemotional, objective examination of the practice of slavery, a practice which is still legitimate today (but not as was practiced in the United States at the time of our founding).

We also will study the **Geographical Will of God; Why the Word of God was Not Supernaturally Preserved**; and we compare manuscripts which we have of the Bible compared to other ancient manuscripts which have been preserved. People typically have a lot of mistaken notions about the Bible and the manuscript evidence which we have for today’s modern Bibles. This section should help set you straight on that topic.

This is a relatively short chapter (only 16 verses), but packed with a lot of important material. 138 pages.

## **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

For 24 years, God has been speaking to Abram of promises for the future, which promises did not appear to have an established foundation from a human perspective—Abram had no sons, and all of God’s promises were off in the distant future based upon Abram having a son. In the previous chapter, Abram and Sarai, his wife, tried

to help God along by employing a surrogate slave girl, Hagar, by whom Abram would sire a son. The result of this union was Ishmael; but this also introduced a great deal of drama to the Abram compound, due to the considerable friction between Sarai and Hagar (this is covered in Gen. 16).

13 years have passed since Gen. 16—Ishmael is a young teenager—and God again comes to Abram, introducing Himself as 'El Shaddai, *God Almighty* or *God Omnipotent*. God makes the unequivocal promise that Abram will have a son by his wife Sarai. God changes Abram's name to *Abraham* (which means, *father of many*) and tells him that he will be the father of many nations and that kings would come from him. God also changes Sarai's name to *Sarah* (*princess*).

God first tells Abraham “Walk before Me and be [spiritually] complete;” and then He tells Abraham to be circumcised—along with every other male in his compound. Furthermore, circumcision is to be perpetuated among his people, whether they be slaves or children born as descendants to Abraham.

We examine many doctrines in this chapter, including: Comparing and Contrasting the Church and Israel; Slavery in the United States; Ancient Translation of the Bible; God's 4 Responses to Prayer; and the Doctrine of Sanctification.

We also study the following topics: Ancient Law Codes and why these codes were developed; we examine the spiritual life of Abram—what it was, and what did Abram know (most believers today do not know the first thing about their own spiritual lives—for instance, most believers today do not know how to get in and out of fellowship with God); Circumcision—just what does it mean and why did God require it; and we look forward to Acts 7 and Rom. 4 to see how our study impacts this New Testament chapters. We will also step back and see the similarities between this chapter and the Suzerain-Vassal treaties of old; and we will look at this chapter as a chiasmus. 231 pages.

## **Genesis 18 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).**

This study of Genesis 18 is the most doctrinally rich study that you will find on any chapter of the Bible, simply because there is so much going on in this chapter. The application of the information of this chapter to what is going on today will amaze you.

In the first half of this chapter, God and two angels come and speak to Abraham. There is a big picture view here, which I have not seen explained in any other resource.

In the second half of this chapter, Abraham speaks to God about Sodom and Gomorrah, cities which are about to be destroyed, and asks, “What if there are 50 righteous men there; will you destroy city and them with it?” This stimulates a great deal of discussion on the concepts of a national entity, a Christian nation, a client nation, the pivot and the spinoff. Are nations just random things which pop up or is there a corporate relationship between a nation and God? These topics are covered in great detail, along with a great deal of application to today's world. A believer *never* has to be afraid of history or of current events; what is true in Genesis and what is taught throughout the Bible about God's corporate relationship with various groups of people continues to be true today. There are a multitude of principles to be found here, as well as a multitude of applications.

Some of the doctrines covered in this chapter include Angelology, Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking; How Isaac's Unusual Birth Foreshadows the Birth of our Lord; What Preserves a National Entity; The Client Nation; the Pivot; Heathenism (What about those who have never heard the gospel?); and the Seeds of Doctrines found in this chapter.

There are also discussions in this chapter about the so-called contradictions found in the Bible; the concept of the national entity; how these concepts relate to today and to recent history. Expect a great deal of modern-day application and illustration to be taught in conjunction with this chapter. 304 pages.



## **Genesis 19** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

This is the first complete chapter posted in Genesis. No major revisions or updates will be applied to this Chapter. This is a complete, word-by-word study of this chapter.

Gen. 19 has the two angels of Gen. 18 going to Sodom to both destroy Sodom and 4 other cities; and to rescue Lot and his family from the destruction.

There are a number of minor errors found in other commentaries. For instance, several commentators have Lot and family carrying out containers of wine from Sodom upon their exit. That is simply illogical and wrong. Some try to cover over Lot's bad choices in offering up his daughters or in later having sex with his daughters. These will all be straightened out in this study.

Because of the subject material of this chapter, there will be an in-depth study of homosexuality and Christianity. The more complete Doctrine of Homosexuality has also been updated. Important information about homosexual men and their number of partners; the continuum of human attraction; the addictive nature of the homosexual lifestyle; AIDS; *Will and Grace*; sexual attraction is not a matter of genetics alone; the pro-homosexual propaganda which has been going into our schools to our youngest children;

Other topics explored in this chapter: the Christian and Politics; the Physical Nature of Angels; the Stages of National Discipline (there is a 6<sup>th</sup> Stage of National Discipline which is included here); the Proportionality of the Pivot in a Nation; Why God Destroys Sodom and Gomorrah; the idea that people want to matter; the Dead Sea Scrolls; along with a great deal of artwork that Gen. 19 has inspired.

You may or may not realize that the fire and brimstone destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah actually has a scientific basis directly tied to the area of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is also an extremely important topic of Scripture, and that will be explored as well.

This is an extensive study of Genesis 19 at over 390 pages of text and graphics.

## **Genesis 20** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In this chapter, Abraham lies to Abimelech the king of Gerar about Sarah, saying that she is his sister and not his wife. Abraham had done the same thing to the King of Egypt back in Gen. 12, and Isaac will pull this same stunt with Abimelech II in Gen. 26. So, you may think, this is going to be fairly repetitive with very little to offer. Wrong.

This chapter is a case study in God taking Abraham, a believer who has lied to his host king; and Abimelech, a host king with too many wives—and God will take these men and their actions and still work it altogether for good, for His glory, and for His plan.

This is a deceptive little chapter. First of all, it seems very similar to the time that Abraham went to Egypt and lied about Sarah. Later on, in Gen. 26, Isaac will lie to Abimelech about his wife. So, at first we might think this chapter to be repetitive and perhaps even disconcerting to those of us who believe in the inspiration of Scripture (is this merely a tradition handed down from 3 different sources?). And it is a scant 18 verses long. For these reasons, a great many commentators chose not to even comment on this chapter. That is a big mistake.

One of the most important aspects of this chapter is, Abraham is clearly set up as a type of Christ, both as a man who represents God to man, and as a man who represents man to God. He will intercede on behalf of Abimelech, and heal him. In all of this, Abraham illustrates the Messiah to come. Not only is this quite amazing, but I do not believe that many commentators fully appreciated this.

Fundamental to this chapter is the concept of grace.<sup>1</sup> God is about to bless Abraham and Sarah with a child—a child who will be a type of Christ—who begins the line of promise and is a sign of the good things to come (that is, the fulfillment of God’s many blessings which He has promised to Abraham). And what does Abraham do, literally a month or so before his wife is to conceive—he gets himself into a jackpot in Gerar by lying to the king, and exposes his wife to another man. Abraham puts everything at risk. What Abraham potentially has done here is put his position as father of the Jews into question for all time. He could not have done anything more stupid or dishonorable. All of a sudden, Abraham is doubting God and God’s protection, despite the fact that God has been with Him for all this time. But, despite Abraham’s failure, God does not withdraw His blessing from him. God pours on the blessing. If you understand grace, you are fine with all this. If you do not understand grace, then this chapter becomes confusing. Abraham fails again, and yet, God still blesses him? And Abraham is already a rich man, and God blesses him more. This chapter should rock the world of the legalist. Furthermore, it ought to rock the world of those who believe in covenant theology. They believe that God finally just gave up on the Jews and gave their inheritance away to us, Church Age believers. Then why didn’t God do that right here? Why didn’t God say to Abraham, “Look, you are not the man I thought you were; you have failed me again and again. You just hang out here and do whatever and I will find someone else worthy of My blessings.” But God does not do that. God not only blesses this failure (and right after he failed too), but God later calls Abraham *His friend*.

This study also includes a number of important doctrines and graphics: several maps are provided so that you have a feel for the territory that Abraham covers; **Sin Cannot Derail God’s Plan**; **The 20 (or so) Dreams of Scripture**; **The Doctrine of the Sin unto Death**; **Shem’s life Overlaps Abraham’s life**; **Examples of God’s Protective, Overruling Will**; **The Parallels between Abraham and the Coming Savior**; **The Fear of the Lord**; **How to avoid repeated sins**; **Abraham’s life seen from the standpoint of testing**; **Jesus Christ in Genesis 1–22**. Several questions are also dealt with: **Speculation: Why did Abraham move? Does God prosper Abraham for lying?**

Like all previous chapters of Genesis, it is not apparent at first just how packed this chapter is with spiritual information, a significant portion of which is unique to this commentary. 199 pages.

## **Genesis 21** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 21 is about the birth of Isaac; the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael; the provision of God for Hagar and Ishmael; and a contract between Abraham and King Abimelech of Gerar.

The birth of Isaac is quite amazing, as there are no fewer than 22 parallels between **the birth of Isaac and the birth of our Lord**. Interestingly enough, most of these were not stated until the past 50–100 years. Nowhere in any of the Pauline epistles does Paul stop and say, “Now, let me explain to you how Isaac’s birth is significant.” None of the gospel writers, who record all of the details of the birth of Jesus, add in a paragraph about these parallels. In fact, the recording of Scripture was done centuries before the concept of type and antitype is fully developed.

One of the things which confused and later fascinated me was, there are passages in the Old Testament which are clearly meant in a specific way in their context; but, in the New Testament, they are given a different shade of meaning; and sometimes a different meaning. In this chapter, Sarah will tell Abraham to throw Hagar and her son Ishmael out. Although we are not told of the motivation here—Sarah could be looking to protect her son and she could be looking for any reason to rid herself of her slave woman and her son by Abraham—Paul, in the New Testament, puts an entirely different spin on this situation. What happened is accepted as an historical incident (which it is), but how Paul looks at it and explains it is very different than what we might suppose. Furthermore, no one during Old Testament times would have ever explained this incident in the same way that Paul did.

The final half of this chapter has perplexed commentators for centuries, who are able to make a few accurate comments on the incidents contained herein, but have a more difficult time explaining the spiritual relevance of Abimelech and Abraham’s contract. It is reasonable to ask, *what do I, as a believer in Jesus Christ in the 21<sup>st</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> If you think that God did not think up the concept of grace until the Church Age, then you do not know God and you do not know His plan.



[and even] His appearance was found to be like a man's. He humbled Himself [by] becoming obedient [to God] to the point of death, even death on a cross.

In Gen. 22, God comes to Abraham and tells him to take his son to Moriah and to offer him up as a burnt offering. This begins one of the most incredible narratives in the Old Testament.

One thing which is clearly found in this chapter is the concept of type. That is, Abraham, by offering his son Isaac as a burnt offering (and then God stopping him, and giving a ram instead to be offered) is clearly typical of God the Father judging God the Son in our stead, pouring the sins of the world upon Him.

Doctrines discussed in this chapter: The Angel of Jehovah; The Parallels between Abraham offering Isaac and God offering His Son on the cross; Operation Footstool; the Doctrine of Typology; Escrow Blessing in the Plan of God.

Subjects examined in this chapter: How can God ask Abraham to offer up his son? How can we reconcile this chapter of the Bible with God's prohibitions of child sacrifice? Homosexuality and how it is portrayed on television. God's blessings to Abraham and the timing of these blessings. The types of genealogies found in Scripture.

We also look at the concept of foreshadowing, in both movies and in human history; one of the most well-known verses in the Bible (*God will provide*) is mistranslated (the way it should be translated is much more meaningful); we take an atheist interlude during this study. At the end of this chapter, we have the genealogy of Nahor—and we discuss why it is here.

A most amazing journey, which ought to increase your faith and enhance your understanding of Who and What God is. 264 pages.

## **Genesis 23** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 23 is one of the most enigmatic chapters of the Bible. This entire chapter seems to deal with relatively trivial information, and could be summed up in one verse: *Sarah died at age 127, so Abraham purchased a plot of land with a cave from the Hittites for her grave site.* There are details about Abraham's interactions with some of the prominent Hittite men which seem excessive, to say the least. You may not realize this the first time you read this chapter; but when you read it a second time, and ask yourself, *why is this chapter in the Word of God*; you might find yourself hard-pressed to answer that question.

This is quite a surprising chapter in the Bible. Gen. 22 was a landmark chapter in the Word of God, with God asking Abraham to offer up his uniquely-born son; and then, in Gen. 23, Sarah dies, and most of the chapter is devoted to Abraham purchasing a plot of land with a cave where he might place her body. This is a very unusual juxtaposition of chapters, examining the mundane details of the purchase of some land in Gen. 23 as over-against the incredible narrative of Abraham offering up to God his son Isaac.

Sometimes in a narrative, it is a good idea to look carefully at the narrative. In Gen. 23, Abraham travels to a nearby city of the Hittites to purchase a fairly large plot of land, and he will place the body of his wife in a cave which he purchases. No doubt, Abraham made 2 trips to this city—but it could have been as many as 4 trips. The text is not completely clear about this. However, a superficial reading of the text would not suggest that there was more than one meeting that took place.

Although this seems like a very odd insertion into the Word of God, this chapter verifies the authorship of Abraham and indicates to us that, if Moses was the ultimate editor of Genesis, then he did not edit anything out; he simply added in a few references to geographical locations, giving them their ancient and updated names. It is this chapter, Gen. 24, and Jacob's remembrances of Rachel which are very telling, and reveal to us the true authorship of the book of Genesis—that these events were recorded by the people who experienced these events. The minutiae of this chapter strongly argues against an historian like Moses assembling the chapters of Genesis some 400 years later, and including information that strikes him as important and leaving out things which seem trivial to him. If Moses assembled the final book of Genesis, he treated it with respect and did not leave any details out

of it. In my opinion, the only thing that Moses (or Joshua) did, was update some of the geographical references (which obviously were added after the fact).

Subjects covered in this chapter: the Hittites; how the people of the land of Canaan changed; business and land deals; the value of silver today; Jewish stereotypes; and the thinking and recollection of Abraham of this time.

Doctrines covered in this chapter: Sarah's Life; Physical Death; and Hebron. 145 pages.

## Genesis 24 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

J. Vernon McGee: *My Christian friend, if you have a boy or girl in your home who is marriageable, you ought to pray that he will not marry one of the "Canaanites." They are still in the land, and there is always a danger of our young people marrying one of them. If they do, as someone has put it, they are going to have the devil for their father-in-law, and they are always going to have trouble with him.*<sup>3</sup>

J. Ligon Duncan on the servant who falls to the ground and worships God upon meeting Rebekah: *He instantaneously falls on his face and he worships God. Success inflates the ego of the natural man, but it humbles the man of God.*<sup>4</sup>

Gen. 24 is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis. Abraham calls in his chief servant and tells him to saddle up and go to Haran in the east to his extended family there and find a wife for his son Isaac. God's promises to Abraham cannot be fulfilled unless Isaac has a wife and children.

Gen. 24 makes us realize just how different God's thinking is from ours. What historian would spend time with such an extended narrative about the material found in this chapter? This is simply not historical, from man's viewpoint. However, from God's viewpoint, this is important. Isaac must have a wife in order for the promises of Abraham to be fulfilled; and he cannot take a wife with a heathen upbringing. He could not continue the faith of Abraham unless he is helped by a life partner who thinks the same way as he does. Isaac needs a woman who also has faith in the Revealed God.

God focuses upon what is important; and yet man often does not even see it.

Because of the length of this chapter, I made a real effort not to include many quotations from other commentators—yet the exegesis of this chapter still ended up being nearly 400 pages.

We study several important concepts in this chapter: that Jesus is not some brown revolutionary Who is giving away free healthcare; how slavery is not the evil which we have been brought up to think it is; how there are different kinds of slavery and some slaves held a higher social position in the eyes of others than you or I; typology and how this chapter continues and completes Isaac as a type of Christ; and there are references to Operation Fast and Furious, Benghazi, our present president and past presidents.

We studied the doctrines of Racial Inter-marriage; Angels; the Divine Institutions; and Slavery. 434 pages.

## Genesis 25 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Although much of Genesis 25 deals with the Arab line from Abraham, there is a great deal about Abraham in this chapter study. In fact, one very extensive section of this chapter study, delves into all of the New Testament passages where Abraham is mentioned.

There is an excellent short section in this study called **The Bible, Poverty, Inheritance, Wealth, and Spreading**

---

<sup>3</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed January 10, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> From [fpcjackson.org](http://fpcjackson.org); accessed January 13, 2015.

**the Wealth Around:** There has been a great deal of communist propaganda which has found its way into mainstream liberal thinking, that makes the God of the Bible to appear to be anti-wealth. Abraham, as a case history, shows that this is simply not true.

Included is an extensive section within Gen. 25: **Abraham in the New Testament** (this is very much a summation of all that we have covered up to this point; as well as seeing how Abraham is referenced in the New Testament). This is simply a look at every New Testament passage where Abraham is mentioned. Within this study, we get an excellent study of a great many Christian doctrines; including at least one you have not seen before.

Some commentary, from time to time, will appear to be very political. Such commentary teaches the laws of divine establishment; or is illustrative of a Biblical principle, which is brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 100 years from now, the principles will remain the same, although the people named from contemporary history will become much less relevant to future generations.

Like most chapters, which I cover, there will be extensive application to contemporary circumstances, philosophies and personalities. We will study or use as illustrations: President Obama, socialism, spreading the wealth, the Bible's view of wealth, our actual history,

We will spend a significant amount of time in the New Testament studying all of the times that Abraham is mentioned by name. This will bring into focus stories from the Bible you may have never heard—like Jesus and the short, rich tax collector. This section is very much the reason for the unusual length of this chapter.

Regarding twin sons Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Rebekah, their parents, chose to raise them separately. Although most commentators who expressed an opinion about this was negative, I will suggest a reason *why* Isaac and Rebekah did what they did. This might put them in a different light for you.



There are several extremely important doctrines and studies presented in this study: **Reinterpreting Old Testament Truths** (the New Testament does not supplant, overwrite, or replace the Old Testament; it provides another dimension to it that was previously hidden); **The Seed of Abraham and the Life of the Believer** (which is a series of parallels); **Canonicity**—who decided what the New Testament would be.

We study the doctrines of the **Human Soul**, the **Human Spirit**, and **Morality**.

There are also two sets of genealogies. I understand how some people may not be that interested in those sections. However, do not neglect this chapter of the Word of God because of the genealogies. There is much more to be found in this exegetical study than named above.

This is a unique and extremely dense study of Gen. 25; it is covered nowhere else in this depth. In fact, it is remarkable to me that some commentaries, like the **Bridgeway Bible Commentary**, only devote 2 pages of commentary to this chapter. The idea is, you will walk away knowing about as much about Gen. 25 as is humanly possible to know. Furthermore, there are unique contributions to be found within this study of Gen. 25—things you will not read anywhere else. 400 pages.

## **Genesis 26 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD) Isaac and Abimelech; God Speaks to Isaac**

William Wenstrom, Jr.: *Unbelief is the failure to take into account and acknowledge the character and nature of God, His presence and His Word.*<sup>5</sup>

Kukis: In this life, as believers, we have both promises and direction from God. They will *never* be in conflict with

---

<sup>5</sup> From [http://www.gracenotes.info/BIBLE\\_STUDIES/GENESIS.pdf](http://www.gracenotes.info/BIBLE_STUDIES/GENESIS.pdf) (p. 397); accessed July 24, 2015.

one another.

Kukis: God knows our limitations and what God requires of us, we are able to do.

Kukis: Anytime a political movement encourages mental attitude sins, you know you are in the wrong movement.

Kukis: God blessing one man does not mean that God withholds blessing from others.

It ought to surprise you, as it did me, that there is a lot of application to be found in the chapter. The concept of envy is examined in great deal, along with two doctrines dealing with envy (the second one deals with envy and socialism); and there is a great deal of commentary about socialism in this study. This is done because communists in Latin America were having trouble making headway with the Catholics there, so they began to teach that Jesus favored socialism and that the Bible was all about socialism and feeding the poor and the needy (even though socialism does not actually do this, it purports to do this). So, instead of communism butting heads with Catholicism, communist principles and doctrine began to be taught as if they had come out of the Bible (this is known as liberation theology). As a result, even the most recent pope (I forget his name; I write this in 2015) has a plethora of socialistic ideas (he is from Latin America, if memory serves). Many of the doctrines and commentary in this chapter put to rest the idea that the Bible teaches socialism.



There are 3 very similar incidents in the Bible, and this chapter examines all of them together. Because Isaac is moved around quite a bit, we study the geographic will of God as well as the will of God in general. We see that Abraham and Isaac both lived in a unique era, when all the survivors of the flood began to die out; and how that related to God's promises to Abraham.

Important doctrines covered: The Doctrine of Envy; the Politics of Envy; Socialism and Envy; The Relativity of Wealth; The Doctrine of Mental Attitude Sins; The Best Use of Our Time; Relocating to Go to a Doctrinal Church; Problems with the Current Democratic Party. How to Live Your Life (as a believer). Isaac in the New Testament.

Important concepts explored: We study how God has blessed the United States; how our schools are funded. We study the dramatic change of mores in the United States where gay marriage is accepted by a majority of people; we see how an entire society can be changed by propagandizing the youth of that society. We examine the bankrupt moral system which attacks and steals from the rich and exalts the poor. We study how higher taxes on the wealthy does not make life any better for the poor. You may have noticed, when corresponding with some people, that they use the word/notation *G-d*. An explanation as to why they do this and why this is stupid.

This is an outstanding and very contemporary study. This not only deals with current political movements, but also answers the question, *what should I, as a believer in Jesus Christ, be doing today?* 345 pages.

## **Genesis 27** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) **Jacob Deceives his Father Isaac**

Genesis 27 is a deceptively simple chapter, where everything appears to be said and explained, but there are events, conversations, and motivations which are important to this narrative which are not clearly laid out. Gen. 27 appears to be simple and it appears to have all the relevant information given to us, but as we examine it more and more thoroughly, it becomes quite clear that there is a great deal of hidden and unspoken information.

**Isaac Blessing Jacob by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout** (Oil on canvas) 1642; from [Web Gallery of Art](#); accessed August 7, 2016.



Gen. 27 is rarely understood, despite its being about a fairly simple series of events. For this reason, few commentators have correctly explained all of what is going on. This chapter is all about words; it is all about the words that Isaac will say regarding his two sons. That is what the entire conflict is over.

The key to understanding this chapter, the blessing given to Jacob and then the blessing given to Esau is the very fact that the words spoken by Isaac have power. They are meaningful, even when they are spoken in a gathering of only two or three.

To understand Gen. 27, you have to understand that, when Isaac blesses Jacob, that blessing has

meaning and power. Once it has been said, it is out there, already in effect; and it cannot be withdrawn. If Isaac could simply withdraw his words, then his words would have been meaningless in the first place. Extenuating circumstances do not nullify the words spoken by Isaac.

It is clear that Jacob is one of the least deserving men of Scripture, who has received some of the greatest blessings of God. This is grace; this is the plan of God. It is men like Jacob who often give us very imperfect believers more hope than a man like Abraham.

Jacobian narratives typically leave out a great many details which can often be supplied using a little logical deduction. Sometimes his narratives are accused of being contradictory not because they are, but because they leave out some details. Much of this narrative is helped along with a few details that may be deduced, and which help explain any questions about the accuracy of the narrative. At the end of this chapter, there will be a summary, where the motivations and actions of the principal characters are clearly laid out, so that everything that happens makes perfect sense. At the end, you will understand what each principal knows (and doesn't know) and what motivates them to do what they do.

This narrative is about the foibles of man, the free will of man, and the sovereignty of God; the actions of man playing out according to their volition; and the plan of God moving forward, despite the things which man does.

As a personal aside, I have worked on this particular chapter on and off for 3 years (2013 to 2016). 505 pages.

## **Genesis 28** Isaac Sends Jacob to the East/Esau Takes an Ishmaelite Wife ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In Gen. 27, it has been determined that Jacob will go east to marry a woman from their family rather than a Canaanite woman, as his brother Esau had married. Gen. 28 begins with his father, Isaac, giving him a blessing before he goes—a blessing which recognizes Jacob as being the line of God's promise.

Esau, his twin brother, takes notice of this and the importance of marrying someone from the family, so, even though he was already married to two women of Canaan, Esau then married a daughter of Ishmael (Isaac's half brother).

Meanwhile, Jacob traveled north, going through Luz, where he had a dream-vision of angels going from earth to heaven and back again; and God is above all of this. God speaks to Jacob and gives him the promises previously delivered to Abraham and to Isaac; and then God promises to be with Jacob wherever he goes; and that He would bring Jacob back to this land.

When Jacob awakens the next morning, he is amazed at the place where he is, and renames it *Bethel* (which



means, *house of God*). At the end of this chapter, Jacob makes a vow to God about tithing.

There is a great deal of supplementary material covered in this chapter. Many have alleged that the Bible is filled with contradictions—therefore, many pages are devoted to taking some of these contradictions and explaining them; which set of doctrines is followed by *The Uniqueness of the Bible*. There are two other very important doctrines in this chapter: *The Spiritual Life in the Old and New Testaments*; and *A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model*.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, 3 sets of original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 209 pages.

## **Genesis 29 Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel and Sires Four Sons** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

In Gen. 29, Jacob arrives at his destination in Padan-aram, coming upon some shepherds who know Laban (Jacob's uncle) and the Laban family. When discussing the use of the well, Rachel, Jacob's first cousin, comes onto the scene, leading a flock of sheep. Jacob tells her who he is and she runs back to her family to tell her father. Her father immediately comes out to meet Jacob, to invite him into their home.

A month goes by and Jacob is apparently helping with the sheep and Laban's ranch, and Laban asks what he would like to be paid. Jacob suggests that he work for 7 years in order to marry Rachel, with whom he was in love. Laban accepts this offer.

7 years later, Laban throws a wedding party for Jacob, and, at the end, Jacob goes to the bed of his new bride. In the morning, Jacob awakens to find that he has married Leah, the older sister, and not Rachel. He goes immediately to Laban and confronts him, and Laban gives him a phony excuse. Laban proposes that Jacob work another 7 years, and that he would also be allowed to marry Rachel. Jacob agrees to this. At the end of Gen. 29, Leah has given birth to 4 of Jacob's sons.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, 3 sets of original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 269 pages.

## **Genesis 30 Jacob Sires More Children/An Agreement with Laban** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 30 can be broken down into two sections: (1) The sons born to Jacob in Haran and (2) the labor agreement entered into between Laban (management) and Jacob (contract worker). Although there is an odd continuity between these topics, they would have more logically been separated into two chapters.

In fact, both Genesis 29 and 30 are oddly divided. Jacob begins to sire children by Leah near the end of Gen. 29 and this is continued into Gen. 30, along with fathering children by Rachel and by the personal maids of Leah and Rachel. The final 6 verses of Gen. 29 should have been combined with the first 24 verses of Gen. 30, and a chapter assembled devoted strictly to the sons of Jacob.

The latter half of Gen. 30 (vv. 25–43) outlines an agreement that Jacob and Laban came to regarding Jacob's future wages; and both men try to cleverly improve on their part of the agreement.

This chapter is often noted by critics of the Bible for two reasons: (1) Jacob marries more than one woman; and (2) Jacob apparently has some odd breeding theories which he puts into practice (these theories would not have been unusual for his day and time). Proponents of gay marriage point to Jacob's polygamous marriage and conclude, "If he can marry more than one woman, then two men can marry." Critics point to Jacob's breeding schemes and say, "This is stupid and unscientific and it is in the Bible!" These objections will be met head-on and explained in the exegesis of this chapter.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, 3 sets of original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 272 pages.

## **Genesis 31** Jacob Leaves Laban's Compound ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Jacob has worked for Laban for 20 years and it has become clear to him that his work and his faithfulness are not really valued by his employer. Furthermore, God has told Jacob to take his family back to the land of Canaan. Genesis 31 is all about Jacob moving his family back to the Land of Promise using his tried and (un)true approach of deception and sneakiness. He convinces his wives to leave with him (which does not require much convincing); so they sneak out of Haran, having a 3-day head start. However, Laban, when he sees that Jacob has left with his family, and that his deity figurines are missing as well, chases down Jacob and catches up to him in the hill country of Gilead (which is east of the Jordan River). The end of this chapter is their final confrontation where both men air out their grievances with one another, and then manage to find a way to go their separate ways, establishing a non-aggression pact between them.

The following studies and short doctrines are found in Genesis 31: What God Achieved in Jacob's Life; Standards of Behavior Agreed to before the Mosaic Law; When Societal Norms Change; What about Jesus' warning not to judge?; When the most fundamental laws are changed; The Husband's Responsibility in Marriage; and Romans 8:28 in the Life of Jacob

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, and 3 sets of original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 354 pages.

## **Genesis 32** Jacob Returns to Canaan and Wrestles with God ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

After sorting things out with his Uncle Laban, Jacob nears the Land of Promise, where he will have a scheduled meeting with his brother Esau, from whom Jacob is estranged. This chapter is all about Jacob's anticipation and worries. He gives a most marvelous prayer, and then he falls back to manipulative, human viewpoint solutions. Finally, because Jacob has spent his life in conflict with Jesus Christ, he will find himself actually wrestling with the Lord right before dawn.

Readers can be easily confused by Gen. 32, because this is Jacob acting positively schizophrenic. On the one hand, he prays this most marvelous prayer to God; and on the other hand, he keeps trying to solve his own problems with human viewpoint solutions. In a sense, he finds himself in conflict with God—does he depend upon God or does he search for a human viewpoint solution to the problems in his life? In his own soul, Jacob cannot seem to decide, *does he place his faith in God or in himself?* He is wrestling in his soul and God brings this point home by actually wrestling with Jacob in his real life. In any given circumstance, will Jacob be guided by his sin nature or will *God prevail [= Israel]* over Jacob's sin nature?

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 216 pages.

## **Genesis 33** Jacob and his Family Return to Canaan ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

20 years previous, Jacob escaped Canaan with his life, having just deceived his father in order to claim Esau's blessings. When Esau found out, he was angry, threatening to kill Jacob at a later date.

Here, the two brothers meet, both men separated from Isaac their father, and both men have apparently matured and put their past behind them. It was a congenial meeting between former rivals, despite Jacob's apprehension the night before. In fact, Esau invites Jacob to join him in Seir, and Jacob appears to agree to this, but he goes in a different direction, remaining in the land promised to his father and grandfather.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 142 pages.

## **Genesis 34** The Rape of Dinah/The Slaughter of Shechem ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 34 is a chapter where the plan of God moves forward, despite the actions of the people in the chapter (we will see this same sort of thing in Gen. 36, 37 and 38). God's plan always moves forward, whether man is cooperative or not.

This chapter also foreshadows the future. The sons of Israel (Jacob) cannot remain in the land because (1) they will either be subsumed by another family or (2) they will be destroyed by the people around them. Or, another way to say this, they will become corrupted and then destroyed. At the end of this chapter, Jacob bemoans his situation: "Levi and Simeon, you have made me odious to the people of this land, and they will gather together and destroy us because we are few in number." And this is why God will have to remove them from the land.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 211 pages.

## **Genesis 35** Jacob's Sons/The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 35 is a chapter of milestones: (1) Jacob and his family move to Bethel; (2) Deborah, Rebekah's maid dies; (3) God reappears to Jacob and Jacob worships Him; (4) Rachel bears Jacob's 12<sup>th</sup> son but then dies during childbirth; (5) Reuben is intimate with one of Jacob's mistresses; (6) the 12 sons of Jacob are listed; and (7) Isaac dies.

What is remarkable is the great grace that God had given to both Jacob and Esau (recounted in this chapter and the next). How petty and ridiculous had been their undue competition and jealousies 20 years previous.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 208 pages.

## **Genesis 36** Nation Esau (Edom) ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

This is the genealogy of Esau. Esau is Jacob's twin brother, of whom God has said, "[Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.](#)" Gen. 36 is Esau's line, including the many rulers who have come from his loins. The line of Esau seemed poised to become great in the land.

On the surface, Gen. 36 appears to be nothing more than a list of names, most of whom are lost to history and not found in the Bible again. However, there are a great many lessons that we can take from this chapter—contemporary and spiritual.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis. 183 pages.

## **Genesis 37** Joseph and His Brothers ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gen. 37 begins the final section of the book of Genesis, which centers on the life of Joseph (with the exception of Gen. 38). From the beginning, young Joseph is clearly at odds with his older half-brothers, who resent the favoritism of their father towards Joseph. Joseph has 2 dreams which particularly irritate his older half-brothers because they indicate that he would rule over them. When the brothers confront Joseph next, away from their father, they plot to kill him. Reuben convinces them not to kill him, but to simply throw him into a pit (hoping to rescue the boy later). Judah suggests that Joseph be sold as a slave and the other brothers agree to this.

Because Joseph is sold to traders, his older brothers send back Joseph's bloodied and torn tunic, to make it appear that he had been attacked and killed by a wild animal. Jacob is heartbroken to receive this tunic and mourns inconsolably afterwards.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis.

## **Genesis 38** Judah and Tamar ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Judah leaves his family and takes up with a Canaanite woman, having 3 children by her. Judah decides to choose a wife (Tamar) for his first son, but he dies. The wife is given to his second son in order to raise up seed for his deceased brother (aka, a levirate marriage), but then he dies. Then Joseph has to figure out what to do about Tamar.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis.

## **Genesis 39** Joseph and Potiphar ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

Meanwhile, Joseph becomes the slave of Potiphar, an official high up in Egyptian government. Because of his competence and hard work, Joseph becomes the highest-ranking slave, in charge of everything to do with Potiphar's house. Potiphar's wife attempts to seduce Joseph, and when she has no luck, she false accuses him of attempted rape. Potiphar throws Joseph into Pharaoh's prison as a result.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis.

## **Genesis 40** Joseph, the Chief Baker and the Chief Cupbearer ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

While in prison, Joseph impresses the warden with his intelligence and competence and he is given the highest rank in prison, being in charge of all the prisoners. Two special prisoners come to him from Pharaoh: the Chief Cupbearer and the Chief Baker. Both men have similar dreams and they are both similarly disturbed over these dreams. Joseph hears them out, and then gives them the interpretations of their dreams. The Chief Cupbearer would be restored to his office and the Chief Baker would hang. Before the men are removed, Joseph pleads his case to the Chief Cupbearer, hoping that he will use his influence in the future to get Joseph out of prison. The Chief Cupbearer is restored to his former position and he forgets all about Joseph.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis.

## **Genesis 41** Pharaoh's Dream and the Famine of Egypt ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

Two years pass, and Pharaoh has a pair of disturbing dreams, and no one in his realm is able to interpret them. Then the Chief Cupbearer suddenly remembers Joseph, so Joseph is fetched from prison. He puts on clean clothes and shaves and stands before Pharaoh. He interprets Pharaoh's dreams, the accuracy of the interpretation being accepted by Pharaoh immediately. There would be 7 good years followed by 7 bad years. In order to mitigate the disaster of the second 7 years, Joseph suggests that a man of great wisdom be sought to impose a temporary tax upon the people, and to collect grain over the first 7 years, and then to distribute this grain in the 7 years of famine. Pharaoh is certain that Joseph is the right man for this responsibility. He names Joseph as the #2 man in all Egypt.

Exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, 90+ translations, original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis.

## **Genesis 42** Joseph's Brothers Come to Buy Grain in Egypt ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

When the first year of famine comes upon the land, Jacob and his family are hit hard, and he directs his sons to go to Egypt to buy grain. They go to Egypt and are put face to face with their half-brother Joseph, whom they do not recognize. He accuses them of being spies in the land, and uses this ruse (1) to find out about the family and (2) to find out how guilty his brothers felt about selling Joseph into slavery. Joseph keeps one son behind in prison (Simeon) and sends the rest home with their grain and with the silver that they brought to buy grain. Their

instructions are to return with Benjamin, the youngest brother and Joseph's only full brother. When they arrive home and discuss this with their father, Jacob forbids it.

Basic Hebrew exegesis, 3 original translations, and 90+ translations. The notes from *Genesis* are transferred over.

## **Genesis 43** Jacob's Sons Return to Egypt with Benjamin ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

In the second year of the famine, it became clear that, they must return to Egypt to purchase more grain or all of their families would starve. Jacob reluctantly allows his youngest son, Benjamin, to return with the men. All appears to be well. The brothers brought the money back that had been returned to them, along with additional silver for more grain. They bring Benjamin to confirm their stories and they all even enjoy a wonderful meal together.

Basic Hebrew exegesis, 3 original translations, and 90+ translations. The notes from *Genesis* are transferred over.

## **Genesis 44** Judah Offers to Be Benjamin's Substitute for Punishment ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

The brothers are sent on their way with the grain and everything appears to be fine. However, when they are scarcely out of Joseph's city, he sends men to stop them. His silver chalice is discovered in Benjamin's bag of grain and Joseph threatens to put Benjamin into jail and let the rest of them return. Judah steps up and offers to remain in jail in Benjamin's stead.

Basic Hebrew exegesis, 3 original translations, and 90+ translations. The notes from *Genesis* are transferred over.

## **Genesis 45** Joseph Makes Himself Known to His Brothers ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

Because Judah offers up himself for Benjamin (Gen. 45), Joseph, known to his brothers as the prime minister of Egypt, can no longer hide his identity from his brothers. He reveals himself to them. He explains to them how, despite their actions against him 20+ years ago, God had a purpose in all of it, which purpose is being fulfilled before their very eyes—delivering them and Egypt from the great famine.

Joseph invites his entire family to live with him in Egypt because of the great famine. His brothers return to Canaan to fetch their father Jacob.

Basic Hebrew exegesis, 3 original translations, and 90+ translations. The notes from *Genesis* are transferred over.

## **Genesis 46** Jacob's Entire Family in Egypt ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

As Jacob (Israel) travels toward Egypt, he stops off in Beersheba to offer up sacrifices to the Revealed God, and God appears to Jacob and tells him that it is okay to be leaving the Land of Promise and moving to Egypt.

A list of all the males descended from Jacob, along with the two females, are given. His wives are also named.

Joseph meets his father Jacob after 20 years.

Joseph gives his family instructions in case Pharaoh asks them about their livelihoods.

Basic Hebrew exegesis, 3 original translations, and 90+ translations. The notes from *Genesis* are transferred over.

**Genesis 47** [J](#)

**Genesis 48** [J](#)

**Genesis 49** [J](#)

**Genesis 50** [J](#)

---

---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

I am presently doing a study on Genesis which I send out by email. Contact me [here](#) if you want to be added to that list. The overall study is of the Bible, but I have spent a lot of time in Genesis. Every time I complete 10 lessons, I post the new lessons on line. They are here:

## External Links to Genesis Broken Down into a Series of Lessons

[Introductory Lessons  
HTML](#)

[Introductory Lessons  
PDF](#)

[Introductory Lessons  
WPD](#)

[Genesis Lessons 1–100  
HTML](#)

[Genesis Lessons 1–100  
PDF](#)

[Genesis Lessons 1–100  
WPD](#)

[Genesis Lessons 101–200  
HTML](#)

[Genesis Lessons 101–200  
PDF](#)

[Genesis Lessons 101–200  
WPD](#)

[Genesis Lessons 201–300  
HTML](#)

[Genesis Lessons 201–300  
PDF](#)

[Genesis Lessons 201–300  
WPD](#)

[Kukis Homepage](#)

[Exegesis](#)

[Doctrines](#)

These lessons are much more detailed than what follows.

What follows is a complete exegesis of the book of Genesis, but it was the first book which I ever attempted to exegete, so that there are a lot of weaknesses. This will give you what I believe to be a very brief overview of Genesis. The lessons above are more detailed, but broken up into 10–20 minute lessons, designed for easy reading. Darkened links are chapters which have been greatly improved upon, and the better exegesis is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

The darkest links have been replaced by a much more thorough exegesis of those chapters. The darker links refer to chapters which have been partially exegeted and which includes all the information found in this document.

## Genesis Chapter Links

<a href="#">Genesis 1</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 2</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 3</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 4</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 5</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 6</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 7</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 8</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 9</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 10</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 11</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 12</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 13</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 14</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 15</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 16</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 17</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 18</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 19</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 20</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 21</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 22</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 23</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 24</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 25</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 26</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 27</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 28</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 29</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 30</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 31</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 32</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 33</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 34</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 35</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 36</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 37</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 38</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 39</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 40</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 41</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 42</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 43</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 44</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 45</a>
<a href="#">Genesis 46</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 47</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 48</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 49</a>	<a href="#">Genesis 50</a>
<a href="#">Genesis Introduction</a>				

To the Reader: what follows is the first commentary which I have done (1995), and for that reason, it is much shorter and filled with typographical errors. The length of this commentary is approximately equal to 2 or 3 chapters of any book which do now. In any case, I do periodically refer back to the work which I have done here, and some may prefer this to later commentaries which I have done, as I deal with less minutiae in this commentary.

## Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

Genesis Introduction	<b>Great Themes of the Bible found in Genesis</b>
Genesis Introduction	<b>Genesis, the Book of Beginnings</b>
Gen. 1:2	<b>The Judgement of Satan</b>
Gen. 1:2	<b>The Trinity in Genesis</b>
Gen. 1:13	<b>What Does the word <i>Day</i> Mean in Genesis?</b>
Gen. 1:26	<b>We are the Shadow Image of God</b>
Gen. 1:27	<b>The Creation of Man</b>
Gen. 22:14	<b>The Offering of Isaac Foreshadows the Offering of Jesus Christ</b>



# Genesis Introduction

## Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

Genesis Introduction    **Great Themes of the Bible found in Genesis**  
Genesis Introduction    **Genesis, the Book of Beginnings**

## Genesis Introduction:

**The Title:** Γένεσις (transliterated, Genesis) is a Greek word which means *origin, beginning, source, birth*, or even of that which follows birth; *life, existence*. This word is found in Matt. 1:18 and James 1:23 3:6. It is not the first word of the book of Genesis in the Septuagint (the original Greek translation of the Old Testament), but it is found in Gen. 5:1 10:1 6:10<sup>6</sup> 40:20. It is an appropriate title for this book. However, this is **not** the word found in John 1:1 nor is it found in the Septuagint of Gen. 1:1. However, a related word from the Hebrew, sometimes referred to as synonymous to *Genesis* is b<sup>o</sup>rē`shīth, which is the first word(s) of Gen. 1:1, properly translated *In a beginning*.

**Author:** Moses likely wrote the better portion of the next four books of the Bible, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Genesis is absolutely necessary as a foundation of these books. Moses very likely compiled and edited the records available to him and the final product was Genesis. Although Moses is called the author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) and although the Pentateuch is given status as inspired by our Lord, nowhere in the Bible is it said directly that Moses actually wrote Genesis (Josh. 8:31 2Kings 14:6 Ezra 6:18 Luke 16:31 24:44 John 5:45–47). This does not mean that he did not write it, but there are indications that these are records put together by other authors. There is some foolishness about how there are several authors of the Pentateuch itself because in some areas we have the predominant use of Elohim (a name for God in the plural) and Yahweh (the singular name for any member of the Godhead). These *theologians* also cite differences in vocabulary throughout the Pentateuch. This is superficial nonsense, not worth addressing at length, although several have done so (see Josh McDowell's *Second Evidence Which Demands a Verdict*). However, let me simply point out that differences in vocabulary are easily explained by (1) differences in subject matter, (2) differences in emphasis, and (3) the text of the source material for Genesis, which at times was probably recorded verbatim (this last point will be covered in more detail below).

These folks who teach that Genesis and other portions of the Bible (chiefly the Pentateuch) were written by 4 principle authors and then woven together are call **higher critics**. This is not to be confused with textual criticism, which is the true Biblical science of determining the actual content of the autographs (the original manuscripts or a perfect copy of the original manuscripts). This involves the examination of possible scribal errors as well as added text (which may be intentional, as in the end of the gospel of Mark, or unintentional when a verse is copied down twice in the same vicinity).

Another problem that *higher critics* have with Genesis are the "contradictory" accounts of the creation of man. Parallel accounts in near Eastern language are common. A second account is often added to provide a detailed account. This will be found not just in the second account of the creation of man, but several times just in the first chapter of Genesis.

The real problem that these aforementioned theologians have is with the Bible being God's Word. *That* is what they do not like. A theory which promotes authors different from the Jewish tradition appeals to them. They do not like the idea that Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, et al., were actually written about the time that these events took place. That makes these documents too historical for them. Furthermore, the idea of calling words written down by men, *God's Word* makes them even more hysterical. Or, at least it is an affront to their preformed intellectual theories. So, when Welhausen came along and said,<sup>7</sup> "Moses didn't write the Pentateuch; other unknown, unnamed authors did, and they wrote it long after Moses lived."

---

<sup>6</sup> This is v. 9 in the English

<sup>7</sup> This is not a real quote.

Such men would like to make God in their own image so they would like to pick and choose from the Bible. If the Bible is *not* what it claims to be, the *Word of God*, then it is much easier for such men to select that things from it they like and reject the things that they do not. In a similar vein, I recall one Sunday school teacher (in Berkeley) emphasizing the commandment "**Thou shalt not kill**" one morning and pointing out that this commandment does not list any exceptions. Had he read a few other chapters ahead or behind, he would have found several "exceptions." If he knew a smattering of Hebrew, he would have known that there are ten words in the Hebrew all translated by the simple word kill; furthermore, all of these could occur in several different tenses, each tense actually modifying the meaning of the verb. God kills and God **mandates** man to kill under certain conditions. This Sunday school teacher's problem was that he had a mindset and he chose to make God in his own image. These higher critics are the same way. They do not want to be under God's authority and they do not acknowledge the God in the Bible, who is the only God.

For those who have doubts and are uncertain, there are a great many books and articles which help us to understand that the Bible is really God's Word and that to believe that, one does not have to suspend his intellect. These books come under the heading *apologetics*. For further information, see **Old Testament Textual Criticism** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); the **Doctrine of Canonicity** (probably **R. B. Thieme, Jr.**) ([Wenstrom](#)) ([Grace Notes](#)—brief) ([Theopedia](#)) ([John Stevenson](#)) ([Dr. Bruce Ware](#)—brief) ([Sid Litke](#) on Bible.org—brief); the **Doctrine of Inspiration** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); a **Study of Inspiration** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); Inspiration ([Wenstrom](#)); **Doctrine of the Bible** (probably **R. B. Thieme, Jr.**); **Lucky Guesses Found in Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)); Science and Faith ([Arthur C. Custance](#)); the **Doctrine of The Authenticity of The Bible** ([Merritt](#)); and **Proof that the Bible is God's Word** or similar studies ([Can You Prove the Bible is True?](#) From Answers in Genesis) ([How Do You Know The Bible Is True?](#) From [Clarifying Christianity](#); [Robert Velarde](#)); [Is the Bible Really the Word of God?](#) ([God and Science](#)); and [The Bible and Science](#) ([The Bible Today](#)).

In a similar vain, some critics attempt to "demythologize" Genesis. That is, they will claim that portions of Genesis that they do not like are myths and attempt to explain or replace these portions with the "lesson" or the "moral" that these passages were to teach. These critics, who are somewhat different from the ones above, have been intellectually overpowered by years of schooling and brainwashing. Having been personally taught evolution in a child development class, in a math class and in an education course when I was getting a BA in mathematics, I recognize that it is easy to believe that evolution is true because so many *educated* people believe it. These people, therefore, have problems with the Genesis account of creation. It is easier to believe the Genesis account of creation once one understands that evolution is not a science, it is a false theory to which unsaved man clings in order to avoid being answerable to God. See [Evolution and the Bible](#) ([HTML](#)) ([BibleOne](#)).

Concerning Moses' authorship of Genesis, a reasonable hypothesis by at least two theologians<sup>8</sup> is that the various authors of the source material for Genesis always began with the phrase *and these are the generations*<sup>9</sup> of...(Exodus generation, Gen. 6:9 24:44). I intend to explore that hypothesis as I exegete this book. Writing from source material does not compromise the Divine authenticity of the Bible<sup>10</sup>. The original records employed do not have to be inspired even though the resultant writing is inspired. God moves through men via the Holy Spirit, so that what results is completely God's Word, although the writer has not compromised his writing style, vocabulary or viewpoint. Just as the Lord Jesus Christ was fully man and fully God as the Living Word, so the Bible is completely inspired and yet still completely the individual work by the individual author.

Because Moses was brought up in the Pharaoh's court and was brought up to be Pharaoh, he would have had the necessary educational background to write what the Pentateuch and he would have access to the source material, both in the library of the Pharaoh and through the Jews that he lead through the desert. There is a reasonable possibility that his father-in-law provided him with some of the source material either through his

<sup>8</sup> Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*, p. 1 and Henry M. Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, pp. 22–23, 30–31, 34–35

<sup>9</sup> This, by the way, is the word which corresponds to the Greek word *Genesis*

<sup>10</sup> Luke, for instance, used source material when compiling his two books, as he was not an eyewitness to all the vents recorded; Luke 1:1–4. Furthermore, Luke and Matthew both probably made use of the gospel of Mark when composing their works.

training (the great oral tradition) or through written documents. However, I think that it is more likely that Moses learned Genesis from another source—perhaps from his mother or sister or even his father-in-law.

**Authenticity:** Jesus Christ quoted Genesis in Matt. 19:4–6 24:37–39 and the author of Hebrews alludes to it as accurate in Heb. 11:4–22, indicating that it is rightfully part of Scripture. The Old Testament also alludes to the books of Moses as being of vital spiritual importance in 1 Chron. 34:14. Genesis is, in fact, quoted over sixty times in seventeen books. Further evidence of the authority of Genesis is that God speaks directly to man several times throughout this book. This is known as an internal claim of inspiration. That is, Genesis from the outset claims to be God's Word. Very few books in man's literature ever make such a claim.

**Time of Writing:** Moses did not seem to have a grasp of his direction in life until he was eighty and God came to him. Actually, it was probably not until the third or fourth plague when his destiny and calling in life really began to become clear to Moses. Therefore, it is unlikely that he wrote anything until the time of the exodus. Scofield estimates this to be 1450-1410 B.C. (as does Packer, Tenney and White in the *Bible Almanac*).

**Progressive Revelation:** God reveals His attributes and His plan and His relationship to us throughout Scripture. The God of Genesis is the God of Job is the God of Jeremiah is the God of Matthew is the God of Revelation. God is immutable—this means that He does not change; or, more accurately, His attributes do not change. His revealing of His attributes, our perception of His attributes, and the application of His attributes may vary from time to time, but His attributes do not change. What we find in the book of Genesis is what is often called the seed of every major doctrine in Scripture (this isn't quite true, but it is close to being true). So, when we meet God in subsequent books, what we find is often an affirmation of His character and essence, and, just as often, an additional shade of meaning or an application of His perfect character to a slightly different situation. This is true of essentially every major doctrine of Scripture, apart from those which are specifically Church Age doctrines, which are going to be found in a more concentrated area of the Bible (specifically, the New Testament epistles). Now, it is still the same God, with the same character and attributes, but the application of His attributes change to some degree, as Church Age itself represents a different dispensation from the Age of Israel. However, despite these doctrines specific to the Church Age, the God of Genesis is the God of Paul, the Apostle. God's essence remains in tact, perfect, and identical throughout every dispensation.

What God reveals of Himself, at any given time, is sufficient to those of that time period. A few generations into the antediluvian period of time, men still knew about the flood, about Noah, and about Adam, as well as about the infiltration of the demons in Gen. 6. They knew about Cain and Abel's very different offerings, and they knew that God sacrificed an innocent animal in order to clothe Adam and the woman after their fall. Personally, I believe that a lot of this was recorded, and very likely, by Noah. He recognized that the flood, which destroyed all that he could see, was an event unparalleled in human history, and that much would be lost from the era. So, he either kept alive the pre-diluvian era to his sons verbally or he recorded this information himself. Whether written records existed before Noah or not; we do not know. Whether he was the first to write these things down, we do not know. However, much of this history was common knowledge and what we know today was passed down, either in written or oral form. In these first few chapters of Genesis, we know a great deal about God and His character, about the Angelic Conflict, and about our relationship to God. There is enough there, in seed form, for us to read and be saved.

During roughly this same era (give or take a few centuries), Job lived, and we observe in the book of Job a theological discussion between Job and his friends. This gives us an idea as to how far some have drifted from the knowledge of God, and yet, at the same, how much about God was known. At the heart of the book of Job is a discussion of God's character, His essence, and how He interacts with us, His creation. This gives us an idea what men knew prior to Abraham, who lived during a time of great spiritual adultery. Although there appears to be a general knowledge of God, and His interaction with man, there is no mention of the existence of Scripture at that point in time. Whether portions of Genesis existed at that time or not is one thing; and whether it was recognized as God's Word is another thing entirely. However, what seems to be key to the theological discussions in Job is, none of them appear to take the Angelic Conflict into consideration, even though the book of Job is premised upon being a part of the Angelic Conflict.

**Overview:** Genesis gives us the only accurate view that we have of antediluvian civilization (what civilization was like prior to the flood). We do have some extra Biblical information about man's life on earth before the flood in Mythology. However, like most history, mythology is distorted a great deal; however, there is more truth to mythological stories than we realize. Genesis acts as a funnel and concentrates upon a particular family and follows this line through the flood, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There are side trips to be certain, but the focus of Genesis continually narrows (as does much of the Bible).

God's grace, totally unmerited favor, is evident throughout Genesis. It is revealed to Adam and Eve, to Cain, to Noah, to Lot, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to the twelve sons of Jacob. We often have a very incorrect understanding of these Old Testament saints that they were good and wonderful men with few defects, men who earned God's respect and love. To the contrary, we find that many of the persons in Genesis were men with feet of clay, with many shortcomings; men who were given grace from God far beyond anything that they could ever deserve.

The Book of Genesis introduces us to the great themes of the Bible (this has been improved in my basic study):

### Great Themes of the Bible found in Genesis

- God, the creator and provider (Gen. 1:1-2 3).
- The Trinity (Gen. 1:1, 5, 26–27):
  - God the Father (Gen. 1:16).
  - God the Son (the revealed member of the Trinity, the Creator). Gen. 2:4, 7 3:8
  - God the Holy Spirit (the power of God). Gen. 1:2
- Sin and its results (Gen. 3:6,16-17,24 6:5-7 13:13 19:1-29).
- Categories of Sin:
  - Original sin (Gen. 3:1–7).
  - Sin nature (Gen. 4:4–5 5:4–5).
  - Personal sin (Gen. 4:4–5, 23).
  - Corporate sin (Gen. 18:20 15:17).
- The Divine institutions:
  - Human volition (Gen. 2:16–17).
  - Marriage (Gen. 2:18–23).
  - Family (Gen. 2:24).
  - Human government (Gen. 11).
- God's grace (Gen 1:28 2:18-24 4:15 37:8-28 45:1-15 50:15-21).
- Sanctification (Gen. 2:3).
- Satan (Gen. 3:1-6).
- Angels as a part of man's existence; however, they play an ever decreasing roll in the life of man (except for the Angel of the Lord). Gen. 3:1–6 6 19:1–29 21:16–21
- The Angel of the Lord (a Theophany; the Revealed Member of the Trinity). This is God interacting with His creation. Gen. 16:7–14 28:12 31:11 48:16
- God's judgement (Gen. 3:14-19 7:17-24 19:15-29).
- Redemption through the blood of an innocent sacrifice (Gen. 3:21 4:3-4 22:1-14).
- The coming Messiah (Gen. 3:15).
- The eventual fall of Satan (Gen. 3:14-15).
- God interacting with man (Gen. 3 17 50:20).
- God's people, the Jews (Gen. 12–50).
- The other nations of the world. Gen. 11
- God offering up His only Son to be sacrificed for us (Gen. 22).
- God's promises to the Jews (Gen. 15:4-5 17:5-8 28:13-15).
- The concept of a covenant relationship between God and His people (Gen. 6:18 9:8–17 15:18 17:1–22).
- The genealogy which will eventually lead to Jesus Christ. Gen. 5:1–32 11:10–32 46:5–27
- The rule of Judah over Israel until Shiloh comes. Gen. 49:10

In looking at my own list above, I am not sure if there are any significant doctrines which are not found in Genesis. Quite obviously, the mystery doctrines of the Church Age are not to be found, but they are not found in the Old Testament, since they are *mystery* doctrines.

[Return to Genesis Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**The Covenants of God:** In Genesis, we are presented with God's covenant to certain men. We will see the Edenic, Adamic, Noahic and Abrahamic covenants. This is where God makes certain promises to man, many of which we have seen fulfilled throughout history. One of the most amazing and most easily verified promise that God has made is the proliferation of the Jewish race. In the later books of Moses, we will see that God will scatter the Jews throughout the world and yet maintain their identity as a race. Today, every major ancient world nation has lost its national identity, whether it be the Assyrians, the Chaldeans or the Hittites. Even the Romans and the Greeks of today bear little or no resemblance to those of the ancient world, and there is certainly no real ancestral tie. Their only tie to their *ancestors* is one of geography. They now occupy roughly the same territory that the ancient Greeks and Romans occupied. As for being blood descendants; not hardly. However, the Jews, even in nations where physical characteristics are extremely similar, still are a race which stand apart from the rest of the national entity, even when they chose not to.

**Additional Background Material:** Allow me to quote from *The New American Standard Bible* in its introduction to Genesis: *Another important feature of Genesis should not be overlooked, namely, the eminently satisfactory way in which it answers our questions about origins. Man will always want to know how the world as a whole came into being. He also will want to know how man originated. Moreover, he feels rather painfully that some major disorder has come upon the world and would like to know what its nature is; in short, man must know if a basic and sure hope of redemption exists for this world and its inhabitants, what that hope is, and how it came into the possession of man.*<sup>11</sup>

The scope of Genesis exceeds that of any other book in the Bible. It begins with the creation of the earth and the universe, which may be several billion years ago, and takes us to the Jews in Egypt several hundred years prior to the exodus. Human history begins anywhere from 6,000 B.C. to even as far back as 10,000 B.C. Only Revelation rivals this scope by taking us from the beginning of the church age all the way to the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. It would be hard to imagine having the Bible, God's Word to us, without the inclusion of the book of Genesis.

Genesis is a book of origins or beginnings, giving us:

### Genesis, the Book of Beginnings

- The origin of the universe
- The origin of man
- The first sin of man
- The first animal sacrifice
- God's first promise to man
- The first murder
- The first United Nations
- The origin of the various languages of man
- The origin of the Jewish race
- God's first promise to the Jewish race

<sup>11</sup> *New American Standard Bible, Study Edition*; A. J. Holman Company, ©1975 by The Lockman Foundation, p. 2.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---

# Genesis 1

**Genesis 1** has been completely reworked and may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WP-compressed](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 1:1–2:3

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

Gen. 1:2	<a href="#">The Judgement of Satan</a>
Gen. 1:2	<a href="#">The Trinity in Genesis</a>
Gen. 1:13	<a href="#">What Does the word <i>Day</i> Mean in Genesis?</a>
Gen. 1:26	<a href="#">We are the Shadow Image of God</a>
Gen. 1:27	<a href="#">The Creation of Man</a>

A great deal of the Old Testament is narrative and, with few exceptions, requires very little in the way of exegesis. However, Genesis is different; it is narrative and requires a great deal of exegesis; particularly in the beginning. We are dealing with issues which are emotionally charged and history which pre-existed man's appearance on this planet. We are dealing with history for which this is the only document of any sort dealing with that history.

**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** [Gen. 1:1]

Two times in the Bible we have the phrase "In the beginning;" here and in John 1:1 in the New Testament. John gives us the first cause, Jesus Christ, the actual beginning. *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...* (John 1:1, 12a). Gen. 1:1 may or may not have been the very first thing created by God, but both verses reach further back into antiquity than we can imagine. We have various scientific instruments which give us the age of the earth as anywhere from five billion to eighteen billion years old. This is time which goes beyond our comprehension and the disagreement is not very trivial. See **the Doctrine of Scientific Dating Methods—not finished yet!!**.

In the Hebrew, God is the word *ʿElōhīm* (א ל הים), which has a variety of meanings. It can stand for judges or rulers as divine representatives, for pagan gods or goddesses, for superhuman beings, for angels, and for God. The Hebrew has a singular, dual and plural for nouns. *Elohim* is plural (this is because of the *im* ending). There is at least one "Christian" cult which teaches that there are only two members in the Godhead, God the Son and God the Father. In that case, the name for "God" here should be in the dual (two) rather than in the plural (three or more). Other cults, including Judaism, presume that this is plural in all cases but when referring to God and then it is singular. The accompanying verb is in the masculine singular. However, for "Christian" cults, this ignores John 1:1, 12a and for all cults with that viewpoint, it ignores the **"Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness..."** (Gen. 1:26a) (*make* in that verse is in the plural). The point which I am making here is simple. In the Hebrew, we begin the Bible with God in the plural, not the singular or the dual. In other words, the Bible begins by teaching the trinity. God is three in personality—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—but God is one in purpose, hence the verb in this verse is in the singular (as the verbs will be throughout most of Genesis 1). As has been said, the seeds for all the major doctrines of the Bible are found right here in Genesis and right from the beginning we have the Trinity.

Notice that this has begun without naming a human author, without claiming divine inspiration, without the kind of beginning which man would have affixed. We do not know who wrote the original draft of this document, whether it was Adam or Moses. Genesis was possibly finalized by Moses, who possibly wrote all of Genesis by examining previous historical documents in his possession. It is my opinion that several different authors wrote the book of Genesis, each one beginning where the previous one left off. We will examine that in the future.

It is also possible that this portion of the Word of God was dictated at some point in time. After all, no man was alive when these events took place. God allows throughout the Bible the style of the human author to shine through. However, this chapter of the Bible, along with the next dozen or so, go beyond style and contain a beauty and a grace and a flow found nowhere else in the Bible.

The verb precedes "God" in this verse. It is the Hebrew word *bārā'* (א ב ר א) and it means *to shape, to fashion, to create to carve, to engrave, to bring into existence and to create out of nothing*. The Qal stem is only used with God as the subject. It refers to the creation of anything new: Gen. 1:1 (the heavens and the earth), 1:21 (water animals), 1:27 (man), Ex. 34:10 (miracles<sup>12</sup>), Num. 16:30 (a specific miracle), Person singular. 51:10 (a clean heart in a man who has sinned), Isa. 4:5 (a cloud/smoke by day and a flaming fire by night for guidance), 41:20 (a desert wilderness is transformed), 43:1(Jacob), 65:17,18 (a new heavens and a new earth and a new Jerusalem), Jer. 31:22 (right man/right woman), and Ezek. 28:13,15 (Satan, in his innocent state).

*Bara* is in the Qal perfect, third masculine singular (as mentioned before, it is used with the plural form *Elohim*). The Qal is the basic form of all Hebrew verbs and the perfect tense is not necessarily completed action (although this context indicates that it is) but it observes the action as a whole without reference to duration or completeness. This creative act is viewed as a whole and if there were any steps or graduations of creation, they are not noted or examined.

*Heavens* is in the masculine dual and *earth* is in the feminine singular. There are two heavens; that which is above us and the throne room of God. These are referred to as the second and third heaven, the first heaven, the atmosphere of the earth, has not been created yet. **[I need to examine the use of heavens in the Bible, particularly the OT for the dual or plural usage]**

The next verse will require some preparation. It says in v. 2 that the earth was without form and void. God, at some point in time, examined the earth and saw it as without form and void. However, Isa. 45:18 tells us that God did not create the earth as a wasted place (the same word as is found here) but He created it to be inhabited.

Verse 2 begins with a conjunction which may be translated *but* or *however*; however, this word is most often translated *and*. God created the earth and the heavens perfect, however, the earth became something. The verb in v.2a is the Qal perfect of *hāyāh* (ה י ה) and it can be translated *to come to pass, to become, to be, to happen, to be finished*. As a Qal perfect, it is translated in most versions as *it shall come to pass* in Gen. 4:14b. What we have is an earth created by God which very likely was created perfect and able to be inhabited and yet it became without form and void.

The next words to examine are *without form and void*. In the Hebrew, these are the words *tōhū* (ו ה ת) *waboh* *bōhūw* (ו ה ו) (or *tohu wabohu*, with the Waw conjunctive). *Tohu* means desolate or a desert. It can indicate confusion, emptiness, empty space, vanity and nothingness. It is a very negative connotation and is found in Deut. 32:10 Job 6:18 12:24 26:7 I Sam. 12:21 Isa. 34:11 41:29 44:9 45:18 49:4 59:4 Jer. 4:23. *Bohu* is emptiness; it is the earth under judgement according to Brown-Driver-Briggs. and they cite Jer. 4:23, which should be read in context to see that this was part of a judgement.<sup>13</sup> Isa. 34:11 is the only other place in the Old Testament where this word is found. As an educated determination, I would say that we are dealing with *desolate and unable to be populated*.

The Hebrew word for darkness here is extreme or extraordinary darkness. The same word is found in Ex. 10:22. This word, like desolate and uninhabitable, all imply judgement. What we must do is to try to reconstruct what has occurred here. We know there is an angelic creation and that they existed prior to our creation. We also know that one third of the angelic creation chose to follow Satan, once an angel, when he fell from grace. It is likely that God provided a place for the angels to dwell as He provided a place for us to live. It is likely that when God created the heavens and the earth that this was not an imperfect creation, but a creation which corresponded with

<sup>12</sup> Not in the Qal stem

<sup>13</sup> As a side note, it is very possible that this portion of the Bible refers to the judgment of the earth when it was inhabited by angels. I will need to do some more study on this.



His character. Therefore, it is easy to conjecture that God originally created the earth for the angelic creation. Along with it, there were animals (dinosaurs) and vegetation (prehistoric plant life). When Satan fell and took one third of the angels with him, God judged their place of inhabitation, the earth, and packed it in ice (the ice age). This allows us to make sense out of this passage along with Isa. 45:18 and Jer. 4:23. This also allows for the age of the earth to be what it is estimated as being yet for the age of man to be young, in fact, very young, by comparison.

**But the earth became desolate and uninhabitable and [extreme] darkness was on the face of the deep.** [Ex. 1:2a]

The deep is a reference to raging waters, especially those of the oceans and seas. The word is right next to tohu in Strong's, making this a very poetic sounding passage.

The next verb, the Piel participle of rāchaph ( ר ח פ ) describes what the Spirit of God did. God's Spirit hovered over, cherished, brooded over the earth as an animal mother would brood over her offspring (it is used that way in Deut. 32:11). The earth is encased in ice and the Holy Spirit must warm the waters. Furthermore, none of this is a part of the first day. It is possible that v. 2 begins the first day of restoration of the earth but the rest of the restoration process all falls into a formula of "God said....God saw...God made...God called....(not always in just that order); and there was evening and morning, the nth day." However, what is clear from this and other passages is that Gen. 1:1–2 could comprise many billions of years.

What is occurring during this time is the trial of Satan and the other fallen angels. The way Satan's fall is dealt with in Scripture is never: "And the following is a description of Satan's fall...." God the Holy Spirit, instead, takes a prophecy or an historical event as it is covered in Scripture and suddenly begins speaking about Satan and prehistoric occurrences. These passages can be found in Isa. 14:12–16 Jer. 4:23–28 Ezek. 28:12b–17. Satan was tried and convicted (with all the fallen angels) and he has appealed the verdict (eternity in the lake of fire). Every issue that he has brought up is dealt with in human history, including "You made me thus!" However, this is a long study in itself and will be covered at another time. What we need to know is that:

### The Judgement of Satan

- God created the heavens and created the earth to be inhabited (Gen. 1:1 Isa. 45:18)
- God created Satan and the angels (Neh. 9:6 Ezek. 28:12b–15a Col. 1:16)
- Satan fell and took one-third of the angels with him (Isa. 14:12–14 Ezek. 28:15b)
- Satan was judged (Isa. 14:15 John 16:11)
- God prepared the lake of fire for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41)
- Satan is not there yet; he is still at work in the world (Isa. 14:16 Matt. 4:1–11)
- Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10)

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We can conclude because Satan has been judged and sentenced to the lake of fire, but is not there yet—and because angels observe us (I Pet. 1:12) and Satan accuses us (Job 1:6-12 2:1 Rev. 12:10)—that Satan's sentencing has been appealed and that we are a part of the appeal trial to show that God is righteous in all that He has done.

**and the Spirit of God gently hovered [or, brooded] over the face of the waters.** [Gen. 1:2b]

### The Trinity in Genesis 1:1–3

- ▣ V. 1 is God the Son, the revealed member of the trinity, Yahweh, Jesus Christ, the creator of the universe (Isa. 42:5 John 1:1–3 Col. 1:16).
- ▣ V. 2 is God the Holy Spirit, Who is the source of our power, yet is unseen.

## The Trinity in Genesis 1:1–3

- ▣ V. 3 is God the Father, Who has planned everything that we see, yet is not seen by us.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

In my estimation, this begins the first day of restoration (called, incorrectly, the first day of creation). There are many men of God who believe otherwise who, despite that mistake in their theology, are excellent teachers of God's Word. However, paraphrasing what J. Vernon McGee would say, "There are other viewpoints held by brilliant men of God; but if you're interested in the correct viewpoint, then here it is."

**Then God said, "Let there be light," and light was [or, came to pass].** [Gen. 1:3]

The first act of the six day restoration, after warming the earth, was to provide light for the earth. This was light from God, not from any celestial star in the heaven, because God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (James 1:17 1John 1:5). This is a completely supernatural act as there was nothing physical, such as the sun or the stars, created to provide this light. All that would come later. The verb "was" is the same verb from Gen. 1:2, except that it is in the Qal imperfect. Vv. 3 and 4 are tied together by a Waw consecutive. This means that we are dealing with a continuous narrative in past time. In a Waw consecutive, the main verb in the previous verse should be in the perfect tense and the main verb in the next verse is in the imperfect tense. This is why we have the slight difference in tenses.

**And God saw that the light was excellent [or, pleasant or good] and God distinguished [or, separated] the light from the darkness.** [Gen. 1:4]

Tōv (ט ט ו ) has a variety of meanings: *pleasant to the, good, excellent, joyful, fruitful, lovely, etc.* Primarily it stands for moral goodness as against immoral evil. In this case, God declared that the light was as He expected it to be, morally good and perfect in the function for which it was invented since it came directly from His hand.

Bādhal (ד ד ב ) means *to separate, disjoin, divide, discern, to make a difference or to divide into parts.* So, what exactly does this mean in this context? God has invented darkness and light.. He will distinguish them by name and He will divide them into two parts by having a period of light (daytime) and a period of darkness (nighttime). God did not make darkness at this point in time because the earth was already enshrouded in darkness, having been packed in this ice, since it had been under judgement. He did not invent light here but returned it to the earth. The angelic creation had light before Satan sinned.

When it comes to a time frame, we can certainly allow that v. 2 could have taken a great deal of time. The brooding or hovering over the waters is in the Piel participle, indicating continuous action. However, the light being brought to the earth is instantaneous. Why do we not have the sun first and then the light? This is how many ancient religions saw things; the sun as the great life-giver. However, God, not the sun, is the originator of heat and light, which He provides in vv.2 and 3. This still does not explain why before anything else in restoration, God creates light on the earth. When the angels and the earth was under judgement, it was packed with ice and enshrouded with darkness. This was the last angelic vision of the earth. God has warmed the ice pack and now brings light to the earth so that the angelic creation, both the fallen and the elect angels, can see what God is doing. This is a part of Satan's trial. Under sentencing, Satan certainly objected to several points. (1) How can a loving God cast any of His creatures into a lake of fire? (2) How can I be responsible for my actions; You created me thus? (3) Is God really righteous? (4) Is God really love? (5) Does God really understand what I am subjected to? (6) Isn't this sentence too severe for the crime committed?

Recall the Satan is a genius and certainly had objections which numbered in the thousands. Human history will answer every objection and vindicate God's judgements and righteousness. So why did God provide light first? So that the angelic creation could observe from the very beginning what would transpire on earth.

**And God called the light day and the darkness He called night. So evening had come to pass and morning had come to pass; one day.** [Gen. 1:5]

Restoration began at night, so there Hebrew "day" begins at night. God warmed the earth in darkness and then provided light. We possibly could have translated the second sentence: *And there had been evening and morning, one day.* This, however, was not the first day of creation. This was one day. I know that the difference has eluded some. Note the end of v. 8: *a second day*; the end of v. 13: *a third day, etc.* V. 5 is not an ordinal number. V. 5 does not say the *first day*. Most translations catch this and the end of v. 5 is translated differently from the end of vv. 8, 13, 19, etc. What is the difference? V. 5 is not the first day; it is one day, invented by God. It is not the actually beginning. In other words, it is not the first day of creation. From that day, we will begin to number the days with ordinal, consecutive numbers. However, there was history prior to this verse. If this was the first day of creation, and if vv. 1-4 were all tied together under day one of creation, then God would have said *the first day* instead of *one day*.

I am struggling with a minor detail here; when evening and morning come to pass, is this a reference to the evening and morning just spoken of, or, have these events occurred, then evening and morning? This "one day" certainly refers back to what has already occurred (we can conclude that from examining v. 31). However, there are two ways of looking at a 24 hour day; a day as beginning with the evening and concluding with dusk or a day beginning with dawn and concluding with the end of night. The Hebrews took a full day as the latter and we look at a full day as the former. We do not know the length of time that God the Holy Spirit chose to brood over the earth. However, daybreak began with the creation of light over the earth. Night follows this day, there is daybreak, and that is one day.

The reason it is done like that can be explained by the beginning phrase in v. 1: *In the beginning*; that may also be translated *At first...* We find this word occurring elsewhere with similar meanings (e.g., *chief* or *choice part*), but we find it quite often in the phrase *first fruits*<sup>14</sup> (or, more literally, *first of fruits*<sup>15</sup>). Insofar as we are concerned, the beginning or the first thing was the creation of the earth. We have no concept of anything occurring prior to that. We theologians often refer to that as eternity past and, as far as I have studied, I do not see any light being shed upon that beyond what we find in the first chapter of John. So what occurred in v. 1 is "the first." However, because the earth became *tohu wabohu*, we have a period of restoration which begins in darkness. (when God the Holy Spirit warmed the earth) and the morning when God caused light to appear. The creation portion is instantaneous. That is, God brings light upon the earth, creates, and then lets the angels examine what He has done throughout the day during the daylight.

The next issue to deal with is the concept of "a day." (1) In the Old Testament (as well as in the New), the word *day* can refer to a period of time less than 24 hours. Gen. 1:5,16 are clear examples where God designates the daytime portion of a 24 hour period of time as a *day*. (2) *Day* can be used for a period of time which exceeds 24 hours (Gen. 2:4 Lev. 23:27). (3) And *day* can be a period of 24 hours (Gen. 2:3 Ex. 20:8–11). Why do some theologians interpret this use of *day* as being greater than 24 hours? (1) Science has convinced many of them that the earth is quite a bit older than 10,000 years, so this will allow us to add in some extra millenniums. (2) *A day is to the Lord as a thousand years*, a quotation from II Pet. 3:8. (3) Some have been so brainwashed with evolution that they would like to allow time for plants and animals to evolve, yet still hold to the Genesis account. However, throughout this portion of Genesis, we have no indication that creation was anything other than instantaneous, with the exception of the Holy Spirit brooding upon the face of the waters and the creation of Eve. The very use of the word *morning* suggests that God, at dawn, created what He intended to create, and then allowed the angels to examine for a period of time what it was that He had done. Our Lord said, *"Let there be light," and light was.* However, if I were trying to designate that these were twenty-four hour days, I would have used the same construction as we see here and tie six days of restoration with six days of work, and the seventh day of rest for God to the seventh day of rest for man. Throughout the Old Testament, when a day is shorter or longer than 24 hours, the context is clear. The examples given for periods of time less than or exceeding 24 hours are clear to any reader. However, if the context does not dictate that we are dealing with a period greater or less

<sup>14</sup> Ex. 23:19 34:26 Deut. 26:2,10 etc.

<sup>15</sup> Brown-Driver-Briggs p. 912

than 24 hours, then I see no reason to interpret this set of six days of restoration as being any different than six 24 hour periods of time. In no wise did God require 24 hours of time to create anything which was created and the Bible does not indicate that there was a longer process of creation with the two exceptions noted. That time gave the angels the opportunity to examine what God had done, and then time to discuss it. After all, our world is here for a purpose and the purpose is tied directly to the angelic creation which preceded us.

Furthermore, in this verse, God designates that the darkness will be called night and the light will be called day. He has set up a specific set of times or period of time and has labeled them. If we want to think that the "creative day" is thousands of years long, that means that the creative night would similarly be thousands of years long. And, if we have a "creative period of time" which exceeds a day, then why does God, immediately from the outset of restoration, classify day and night and then tells us that one night and one day have just transpired when thousands of days and nights would have transpired in such a creative period of time? If God's Word tells me or implies through exegesis that we are dealing with creative periods of time, then I have no problem with that viewpoint. But the clear teaching is that God first classifies the concept of night and day, tells us that one night and one day have just passed and that was one day. I don't think that He could be any more clear than that. Now, what we should cover in greater detail is **the Doctrine of Days—not finished yet!!**

**The God said, "Let there be an expanse [or, a firmament] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse, and it was so.**  
[Gen. 1:6–7]

All of angelic creation is intently watching the restoration of their previous home, which had been packed in ice. God brought light again to this planet and when the light appeared, the ice pack had been melted. However, the earth is covered entirely in water. God lifts an appreciable amount of water above the earth, giving the earth a belt of water vapor. This is an interesting point. If this were mythology or the product of Moses' imagination, why have one kind of atmosphere here in the beginning of Genesis and a different atmospheric conditions after the flood? This idea is certainly not beyond the realm of human imagination, but why develop this in a fictional account of history and then change it a few chapters later?

The expanse or firmament is not land, although, according to Brown-Driver-Briggs, the Hebrews viewed it as solid, but atmosphere or the first heaven (in v. 1, the two heavens are space and the throne room of God. So, we now have an earth covered still in water, an atmosphere, and a band of water vapor, very likely thicker and more distinct than what we have now. The word we are dealing with in the Hebrew is *râqîya* (רָקִיעַ) [pronounced *raw-KEE-ahg*], which means *extended surface, expanse*. It is that which has been beat down and spread out above the earth and refers to the earth's atmosphere. The related verb is used to overlay something with a thin plate. The precision of this term is amazing. The earth itself is 3960 miles in radius. 99% of the atmosphere is within 100 miles of the surface of the earth.<sup>16</sup> I, with the rudimentary understanding of the earth and its atmosphere, if I had to choose the best noun from the Hebrew for this word, I would have chosen *râdîya* myself. The writer of Genesis not having the resources and background that I have, chose the same word. Strong's #7549 BDB #956.

By interpretation, God the Father is speaking here and God the Son is performing the action. The early readers of this would not know this; we have learned the functions of the various members of the Godhead by information which we have distilled from the New Testament; particularly the gospels. We know that God the Father does the planning, God the Son is the visible member of the Godhead who acts in accordance with God's will. The Holy Spirit provides the divine power, although He is the unseen member of the trinity that does not speak of Himself.

**And God called the expanse heavens. And evening had come to pass and morning had come to pass; a second day.** [Gen. 1:8]

Heavens, or *shamayim*, is always found in the dual. I can refer to the earth's atmosphere (as it does in this passage), to a location which is far removed from the earth's atmosphere (Gen. 1:14 Isa. 34:4), to the entirety

<sup>16</sup> *The World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 by World Book, Inc.; Vol. 6, p. 11.

of creation (Gen. 1:1) and to the throne room (or, dwelling place) of God (Deut. 26:15 1Kings 8:30 Psalm 2:4). God has placed over the earth a shield of water vapor to hold in the atmosphere but, unlike every other day, He does not stand back and observe that it is *good*. This will be the source of judgement in Noah's day and the way that God will water the earth and this thick water vapor barrier will no longer exist after the great flood. So God does not observe that this is good, or fully functional, or will fulfill the purpose for which it was designed until the end of human history.

**Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear" and it was so.** [Gen. 1:9]

As I was typing this, I thought to myself that it would be dramatic if, rather than this occurring instantaneously, that God allow these waters to recede slowly and the earth to emerge slowly, for dramatic effect. Keep in mind, we have an audience. Although no man was a witness to this, all of angelic creation was able to observe this. It just so happens that the verbs for gathered and appear are in the Niphal imperfect tense. The Niphal is simply the passive stem of the Qal, but it goes beyond that. It can be used to describe action which is in progress; with the imperfect, since we are dealing with a completed action, this indicates that this was perhaps not instantaneous but a process. It did not take a full day, but it may have occurred over the period of a few hours. It had been perhaps several billion years since the earth had been habitable and this dry land appearing indicates that it will be inhabited again.

**And God called the dry land earth and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.** [Gen. 1:10]

Notice how God has caused the dry land to occur. The dry land is not brought up but the water is caused to recede. This must mean that tremendous amounts of water were stored under the earth's surface. This is where this water went to.

**Then God said, let the earth sprout grass, herbs yielding seed, fruit trees bearing fruit after its kind, with seeds in them on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grasses, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seeds in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.** [Gen. 1:11–12]

*Sprout* is the Hebrew word  $\text{קָצַף}$  (*yâtsâ*), which has more meanings than you can shake a stick at. It is used in so many ways in the Bible, that B-D-B devotes over six columns to it. It generally means *to go out, or to march, to go forth*, with an emphasis upon origin. The translation given to it is suitable, **in context**. It is in the Hiphil imperfect. The Hiphil is the causative stem. The way this is used is the subject (in this case, the earth) participates in the action of the verb. That is, God causes the grass to grow but the earth is a participant in this action. Imperfect sometimes refers to incomplete action, sometimes to action which is a part of the whole and to continuous action. Here, all are involved. These plants did not grow and that was the end of plant growth. Trees and grasses continue to grow even to this day. Therefore, this action is incomplete and it is only a part of the while action. Like the dry land emerging, this probably was not instantaneous, but similar to time-lapse photography, although this is only conjecture on my part.

What grew precisely was this:  $\text{קָצַף}$ , which is *grass or fresh shoots springing out from the earth*. It would not be a classification of thing created with the following two words being examples of it, but a separate category.  $\text{בְּרֵאשִׁית}$  is herb, herbage or (possibly) plants. It is a particular type, the kind yielding seed. Some plants and grasses are spread by runners, primarily and some are spread primarily by seed. *After their kind* could be rendered *after their species*. We also have trees ( $\text{עֵץ}$ —which is also translated *wood*); in this case trees which bear fruit and the seed is in the fruit. This, very likely includes pine trees and the like. *Fruit* does not have to be something that we eat. It is what the tree produces. The reason I mention this things, which otherwise would seem patently uninteresting, is because of Gen. 2:5, one of the many alleged contradictions found in the Bible. You would think that Moses, being the genius that he is, would have caught this a corrected it a long time ago; or perhaps we are talking about slightly different things.

God the Father observes what He has created and declares that it is morally good; it is exactly what He chose to create exactly suited for the purpose for which it was created. Whether there is a relationship between this vegetation and that from prehistoric times, I do not know. Certainly, naturalists would prefer to see this occur over a longer period of time. The dry land appears over a period of several centuries and then, slowly but surely, the seeds buried in the ground begin to bring forth vegetation, which spreads throughout the land. However, that is not the picture we are given here; therefore, that is not how God chose to restore the earth.

**And evening had come to pass and morning had come to pass; a third day.** {Gen. 1:13}

This reference to a *day*; what is meant here?

### What Does the word *Day* Mean in Genesis?

- God has a period of time during which He creates or restores a portion of the earth.
- After each creative period of time, there is evening and there is morning, each a masculine singular.
- God, in Gen. 1:5 defines this period of time as being *one day*. It is not **a** day or the **first** day but **one** day.
- If God defines this period of time as one day, an evening and a morning, and repeats this phrasing throughout, why should we look at it differently? God could have certainly restored the earth using multifarious methods. He chose semi-instantaneous to instantaneous restoration.
- God will further define what constitutes one day when we move forward a few verses.

#### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.** [Gen. 1:14–19]

Up until this point during these restoration days, light had been provided directly by God and He removed the light for the evening. Except for vv. 15b and 17b, the word for lights (נֹרָא) refers to a luminous body (and also to a lamp stand). The word is related to that found in Gen. 1:4–5, but it is not the same word. My question here as whether these luminous bodies had already existed and had not shown upon the earth because it was packed in ice and then because it was covered by a thick water vapor or whether they were created instantaneously during the third day. Both viewpoints will have their problems, adherents and detractors.

There are actually three possible viewpoints here, accepting the accuracy of what I have presented so far. (1) These lights could have always existed (and it would have been logical for them to have existed since angelic creation occupied the earth). Our problem is that it sounds as though God just made them on this day. (2) Another viewpoint is that He made them on that day and instantaneously provided the light from these stars to the earth, bypassing the speed of light concept. Why would that have been necessary? We have stars which are millions of light years away from our planet which we can see; therefore, their light would have taken a million years to reach us, from the inception of the star, pushing back this date for restoration beyond the time frame of the Bible. In the latter scenario, God would have had to have supernaturally provided the light from these stars. The problem here is that scientists, when they come to the point of being able to measure the speed of light and the distance of the earth from these stars, then this does not jive with what they understand to be Biblical creationism. The upshot of that is God has, in His creation, given us scientific information which is misleading. It appears as though the stars are billions of years old when, in fact, they are only ten thousand years old. (3) A third possibility is that He had created the stars billions of years ago as a part of Gen. 1:1, yet just created the sun and the moon for the earth during the fourth day. My natural inclination is to accept the last viewpoint.

Since God has created certain forms of plant life in vv. 11–12, when night comes, we can have an absence of light but not an absence of heat. God, the Holy Spirit provided the warmth to melt the ice pack and that warmth is held

in place by the highly vaporous atmospheric belt around the earth (along with the temperature of the waters and the earth. Furthermore, there is no indication that the Holy Spirit has stopped brooding over the earth yet.

V. 14 begins with the waw consecutive Qal imperfect of *said*, the imperfect being part of the waw consecutive construction (meaning, we can add the word *then* to this translation. The imperfect also indicates that we do not have the complete action (God will continue to issue commands concerning His plan for restoration). The Hebrew word of *lights*, as pointed out before, means *luminous bodies*, and it is in the plural of three or more. This means that God commanded for there to be three or more light bearing bodies to come to pass or to come into existence. These light-bearing (or, light-reflecting) bodies were to be in the expanse of the heavens. The purpose of the lights would be to *separate* the day from the night, previously defined in v. 5. The Hiphil stem means that the subject participants in the action of the verb (but is not the sole causative force). In addition to the lights separating the day from the night, they are *to be* a means of our ability to distinguish seasons and days and months and years. The verb here is in the conjunctive Qal perfect, meaning that these are additional uses of these luminous bodies. The Qal perfect is a part of the waw conjunctive (i.e., it indicates that we have a conjunctive clause rather than a consecutive clause here).

V. 15 also begins with a waw conjunctive. That is, the purpose of the sun, moon and stars stated in this verse is not a separate action from v. 14. Nor does it indicate that we are dealing with something different in vv. 14 and 15. From hereon in, light will be provided on the earth by these luminous bodies. The verse finishes with *and it was so* or *and it came to pass*.

**And God made two great lights, the greater light for the dominion of the day and the lesser light for the dominion of the night; the stars also. And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth and for the dominion of the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. And evening had come to pass, and morning had come to pass; a fourth day.** [Gen. 1:16–19]

Whereas vv. 14-15 give God's commands and the indication that these commands were carried out, v. 16 actually deals with the carrying out of the plans. The Qal imperfect waw consecutive of *'āsāh* (אָסָה), which is different from the word in v. 1. In v. 1 we have the possibility of creating out of nothing. Here, we are dealing with a word which means *to do, to make, or to fashion*. That is, we have some raw materials to work with. This is not a verb exclusive to this context; Israel is told to *asah* the Law (Ex. 23:22). The waw consecutive means that God the Father issued the order and God the Son *then* carried out the action. The sun and moon are obviously what are dealt with here, each having dominion over the day or the night. The materials or the sun and moon themselves pre-existed because this verb does not imply *creation*. Therefore, they could have existed for the angelic creation and God made some modifications upon them. If the earth was packed in ice, then the sun certainly could not be the same intensity and distance from the earth as it is now. Whether there was a change in the orbit or the intensity of the sun, we do not know. Furthermore, they were placed or made in such a way as to provide for us a day and night as has already been defined, further indicating that these days spoken of in the Bible in this portion are 24 hour days. V. 16 ends with *the stars also*. God also fashioned the stars out of what was already there. This indicates that it is very likely that they preexisted this time of creation. There may have been some rearranging of orbits or other fine tuning which was done, but this was not as important as the work done on the sun and the moon. There is not even a verb here.

The Hebrew often looks upon an act with successive clarity. We are used to time-linear action. That is, we did this first, this second, this third, and now we are finished. That is not the case in this passage. V. 15 ends with *and it was so*. V. 16 does not pick up from there, but expands upon *and it was so*, and explains what happened to make this come to pass. V. 17 is a continuation of the explanation as to what was involved in the process implied by *and it was so*. Once God fashioned the sun, moon and stars, he placed them in their orbits in the heavens. Again, this was all a part of the fine tuning to provide for sustained life on the earth. The stars were for signs and days and years. One theologian has said that the entire Zodiac system, properly understood, is the message of the gospel (this is apart from the concept of Astrology).

On this day, it is important to note that God did not create the sun, moon and stars, but that they were made out of existing material, meaning that they likely pre-existed and God made some modifications upon them (after all, the sun had been burning along with the stars for billions of years). These modifications would have included their placement into possibly slightly different orbits. Although intent in other passages is more clear than in this one, I believe that these few verses indicate that the star light did not have to be supernaturally brought to the earth but that they had existed for billions of years, thus allowing their light to come to the earth.

Vv. 17–18a tell us that they were placed into their orbits, in the heavens in such a way as to (1) provide light for the earth, (2) for one luminous body to have dominance during the day, the other one to have dominance during the night (we do not have a clue as to how it was during the angelic habitation of the earth), and (3) to separate the light from the dark. With these purposes in mind, God observes that this portion of His creation was good; that is, well-suited and well-designed for its stated function. As we have seen thrice before, then there was dusk and then there was dawn, a fourth day.

**Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures and let bird fly above the earth on the face of the expanse of the heavens." [Gen. 1:20]**

Unlike the creation of mankind, the creation of the fish, water mammals and birds was done instantaneously for thousands upon thousands of creatures (possibly millions). The verb for swarm could even be construed (in the right context) to mean germinate; however, this is not the same word as is found in Gen. 1:12 (where the earth puts forth vegetation) and it is not in the same tense. In the Hiphil, as found in v. 12, the subject, earth, participates in the action of the verb. However, here, the other verb is in the Qal stem, which means the animals of the sea did not arise out of the sea itself but were created creatures (we will see that in the next verse). We do not have the word for *fish* here but rather the two words for *living creatures* or *living souls*. This is simply because the earth is filled with all kinds of things which are alive and fish only make up a portion of this. We have all types of crustaceans, invertebrates and mammals. The Hebrew words used here cover those categories as well as the category of fish.

Birds were also on the agenda for this day. The Hebrew word here is 'ōwph ( אָוֶפֶת ), which can stand for winged, feathered or flying creatures. Therefore, this probably included the creation of flying insects, birds and flying mammals. After God the Father verbalizes the mandate, God the Son executes it:

**And God created the large whales [and other sea creatures] and every living creature that moves which populate the waters [lit., with which the waters (are) swarmed] after their kind, and every winged bird [and other flying creatures] after their kind; and God observed that it [the creation of Jesus Christ] was good. [Gen. 1:21]**

"Great Sea monsters" is the way the first couple of words are usually translated. It is translated (without the adjective *great*) serpent in Ex. 7:9,10,12 and dragon in Jer. 51:34. Such a wide variety of translations indicates that we are uncertain as to its meaning; and, over the centuries, from the early records of Genesis, to the recording of these records by Moses, to Jeremiah, that the word could have changed in meaning. *Every living creature that moves* is, literally *every living soul glides about*. The latter participle can refer both the land animals scurrying across the ground or to water animals gliding through the waters. In context, this is the latter usage. God created a large number of animals which filled the seas and other bodies of water.

There are some who believe that this period of time was long and a creative period of time as opposed to a day. Whereas, I do not believe that the correct interpretation of this supports that, this does not mean that they are not our brothers in Christ. Often the fossil record is cited as supporting evidence that these were creative periods of time rather than days. However, there are a great many presuppositions which are involved in the interpretation of the fossil record and the dating methods involved. There is certainly bias on the part of the evolutionist as there is bias on the part of those who believe that the earth is 6,000–10,000 years old. The former have, for decades, been the exclusive interpreters of the fossil record. The latter, a group of dedicated theologians and scientists, have reinterpreted the fossil record over the past quarter century or more with their own predilections. And, even more recently, there are a group of believers who believe that these days of creation are longer periods of time



and interpret the fossil record (and other scientific data) to fit their slant. My expertise in that area is quite limited. Disregarding the fossil record and any other type of scientific data, these days appear to be 24 hour days and the creation seems to be instantaneous of a substantial population to begin with.

*After their kind is according to their species or kind.* This certainly does not support a belief in evolution. Whereas a Christian can believe that all races of man originated from one set of parents, Adam and Eve (and, later, Noah and his wife), as all dogs could have a common ancestor, the Bible does not support an evolving of one species into another. That is, reptiles did not sprout wings and fly and later become birds. The primate population did not have a series of positive mutations which resulted in a humanoid prototype which later became a man with a soul and spirit. We have a very well-defined set of animals here (as we did with plants in vv. 11–12) which do not change into other species.

**And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let the birds multiply on the earth." And evening came to pass and morning came to pass, a fifth day.** [Gen. 1:22–23]

The word for *bless* is *bārak*<sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ:), and it means *to bestow with favor or grace*. God did not pronounce a blessing upon the plants. Here He does upon the animals of the seas and of the skies. Also, the Bible speaks of the animals as living *souls* but does not refer to vegetation in that way. There is an obvious, vast difference between the two kingdoms. The soul means that the animal is capable to limited emotional response and other brain activities similar to man, but certainly not at the same level.

The word *bārak*<sup>e</sup> is used for the first time (in the Piel—intensive—stem), and God is the One doing the action of the verb, and God blessing the fish and the birds means that God calls for them to multiply; i.e., to have lots of baby birds and fishes. In other words, God blessing animals is associated with them multiplying in abundance. This may help to explain why we call newborn babies a blessing, despite all the evidence to the contrary.<sup>17</sup>

We cannot draw any sort of conclusion that these animals are breeding like crazy from the beginning, yet Adam and the woman, not yet created, would have no children until after the Fall. We cannot take this interpretation, because the exact same verbiage is used in Gen. 1:28 with the man and the woman. It is possible that animals could breed from the very beginning, but we cannot really come to that conclusion because of the similarity of verbiage in vv. 22 and 28.

**Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind; cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so.** [Gen. 1:24]

On a sixth day (which is not **the** sixth day), God creates the animals on the earth. Why He did not do this the previous day, we do not know. Furthermore, we are not positive as to when God created insects in general. Not everything which God created is necessarily mentioned here in Genesis. It is possible that the insects on land were created on this day and the insects of the seas and air were created on the fifth day.

*Creeping things* was a word which we encountered in Gen. 1:21 and there it was translated *to move* or *to glide*. It is used of animals in and out of water. Here, these are animals which scurry across the ground and run across the ground. And, as has been the pattern, God the Father issues the decree, and God the Son executes the command:

**And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind; cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground after their kind; and God observed that it [this aspect of His creation] was good.** [Gen. 1:25]

---

<sup>17</sup> Just a joke. ©

It is interesting that God did not create all animal life on the same day or on consecutive days apart from the creation of man. I do not know why that is other than to create the land mammals on the same day. However, there will be often things which God does which are inscrutable, and I do not believe that this will be that important.

**The God said, "Let Us make man in Our [shadow] image, according to our pattern [or, likeness]; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." [Gen. 1:26]**

Throughout this chapter, God is speaking. We know that there are three members of the Godhead, which means that God is not talking to Himself. In fact, now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament**. ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

However, the reason He is speaking is that He has an audience, all the fallen and all the elect angels. He is not speaking to them but He is speaking on their behalf. What is transpiring will be crucial to their understanding of His judgments and His righteousness. One of the things which the angels will observe is how miserable the fallen angels will make life for man upon this earth. God will put man into perfect environment with everything provided for him, including right man and right woman, and Satan will do what he can to ruin this idyllic situation.

God is doing something with man that He did not do with the animals; God will create man in His own image. What is meant? The word image is from the Hebrew word tselem (צֶלֶם), which can refer to the images of heathen gods, but also it means *image, likeness, resemblance, shadow image and definitely not an exact duplicate*. D<sup>e</sup>muth (דְּמוּת) means *likeness, similitude, pattern, or model*. The latter word can be used as a son has the likeness of his father. The word make is the common word 'āsāh (עָשָׂה), which has been found in v. 7, 16 and 25, and it means *to make, to do or to construct out of something*. In v. 7, God made the atmosphere out of the existing elements from the earth and the water; in v. 16 he constructed the sun and the moon from existing elements (it is possible that they both existed and God worked with them until they were suitable for His purposes); and God made the land animals. The Bible says that God both made and created man, so it is likely that He both made and created all animal life.

The pattern of God is the three members of the Godhead; we were created with three separate components, the body, the soul and the spirit. We were made from the pattern of God and out of the earth (i.e., the elements of the ground). We are the shadow image of God in several ways:

### We are the Shadow Image of God

- God is sovereign, we have volition
- God is omniscient, we have intelligence
- God is immaterial and cannot be seen; our greatest part is our unseen person
- God has a physical manifestation; we have a body
- God is love, we have an emotional love capacity (or, better, the ability to love)
- God is eternal life, we had perpetuated life
- God is completely aware of His Own character; we possess self-consciousness
- God is omniscient; we can perceive through our five senses the world around us

**[I possibly have more notes on this in my notes on Acts 20:5-10 with Thieme)**

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Notice that the previous stomping grounds of the angels, the earth, once frozen in ice after the fall of Satan and the angels which he took with him, is now given to man and put under man's control and dominion. This would be infuriating to Satan and the other fallen angels because man is so weak and small and inferior in intellect and power and movement as compared to the angels. With this statement, Satan immediately began to plan to take

the control of the earth away from man. After all, Satan is more intelligent, more charming and superior to man in almost every way; it seems that taking the dominion of planet earth from him would be easy.

The Hebrew word for man is 'ādhām (אָדָם), which we recognize as *Adam*. Here it refers to mankind in the collective sense (see v. 27) as well as to the first man in the singular sense (Gen. 2:20).

**So God created man in His own [shadow] image; in the [shadow] image of God He created him; male and female, He created them. [Gen. 1:27]**

Barah is our creation verb, and it likely means to create out of nothing. It has already been used in vv. 1 and 21. God created Adam only, at first, but the soul of the woman is incubating inside of him (Gen. 2:7,18 5:1,2). This is not significantly different from a woman carrying within her a fetus, a prototype soul and body for her soon-to-be child. People often speculate what would have happened had Adam and Eve not sinned. For instance, the woman assumed all the responsibility when it came to giving birth. This, and the next chapter indicate that it is possible that the man might have carried his right woman within him and, at the right point in time, "given birth" to his right woman. So much for speculation.

*Created* is used twice in this verse; first in the Qal imperfect and then in the Qal perfect. Often, the imperfect examines the action of the verb from the standpoint of unfinished work or only a portion of the action is alluded to. The entire act is not looked at, just a portion of it. The perfect tense looks at the act as a whole; as a completed total action. When God created man, this was only a portion of the creation of man. The completed action of the creation of man is the creation of man and the woman. Despite the popular women's lib saying of the eighties, man and woman are generally incomplete without each other.

What gives me pause at this point is the actual activity of this sixth day. Did Adam live for several days or weeks prior to the creation of Eve (who is actually called the woman until after the fall; then she is designated *Eve*)? V. 27 ends with the verb for create with a masculine plural suffix. This is why the verse ends with the word *them*. Throughout all of vv. 28–29, all of the verbs have masculine, plural suffixes, meaning that God is speaking to two or more people. Chapter two of Genesis, is not a continuation of a narrative, but it is a close-up examination of the sixth day. Chapters 1 through 2:3 give us an outline of what occurred on the first seven days (with a bit of eternity past thrown in).

The remainder of chapter 2 deals with the sixth day.

### The Creation of Man

1. The creation of man (singular) was an incomplete action or just a portion of the action; this is what the use of the imperfect tense means (Gen. 1:27a).
2. The complete action was the creation of both the man and the woman; and so the Qal perfect is employed (Gen. 1:27b).
3. Man is both created (v.27) and made (Gen. 6:6). The materials used in the *making* of man were the elements of the ground or of the earth. That is, our bodies are made of the exact same elements that the earth is made up of. Using these elements as building blocks, God *formed* our bodies (Gen. 2:7).
4. God, using the genetic material from the man, built the woman. This was not a cloning process but God designed a complementary person for the first man in all respects (Gen. 2:20–23).
5. Animals were also *created*, *made* and *formed* (Gen. 1:21,25 2:19).
6. When God rests on the seventh day, it is not because He is tired, but because He is finished with the creation of everything necessary to that point in time (Gen. 2:1–3). This indicates that the woman was built on the sixth day.
7. The careful use of the plural suffixes throughout Gen. 1:27–29 and the lone use of the singular suffix in v. 27 indicates that God was speaking to Adam and the woman in the latter two verses.
8. The language of that time often gave a synopsis of the action and then would focus in on some detail. For instance, Gen. 1:15b (as well as vv. 11b and 24b) ends with *and it was so*. That is, this indicates that the command of that verse was carried out. However, the following verse in each case gives us a more

## The Creation of Man

complete view of the action alluded to at the end of the previous verse.

9. This is precisely what is occurring in chapters 1 and 2. We get a synopsis of the sixth day in Gen. 1:24–31 and then we are given a closer view of this sixth day in Gen. 2:7–25.
10. Most people, like myself, have a *linear-time* bias. That is, we like to see things laid out in chronological order. When I first began to read through the Old Testament, I tried to set up my readings so that they would correspond to the time frame in which they occurred and read them chronologically. This, however, was not the way the Old Testament is set up (or was set up). God invented time and space and is not subject to either. His view of time is different from ours. He sees the end from the beginning and His plan takes into account every free-will choice that every person on this planet would ever make. Therefore, we should not impose a strict linear time-frame to Gen. 1 and 2. Gen. 1:27 tells us that God created man (singular) and then says He created them, plural. We should, barring other evidence from the Scripture, accept this as what occurred on the sixth day of restoration.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**And God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [Gen. 1:28]**

In this verse, God gives the man and woman authority over the earth. The angels are watching and the fallen angels are irritated because this was their previous home. They had dominion over the earth and now God has given it to this very weak creature, man. Even though the birth process has not been put into place yet—that is, it is unclear as to who will give birth to children or how—God commands the man and woman to procreate and to fill the earth with their progeny.

There are a great many environmental movements and individuals who behave as though man is an intruder on this earth and that the earth would be a much better place without man. That is, our activities should be as inconspicuous as possible. However, God has ordered us to *subdue* the earth. Kâbash (ש ב כ ) means *to conquer, subdue, tread a path, dominate, squeeze and kneed*. This includes planting, harvesting, building, etc.

**The God said, "Behold, I have give you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, every green plant for food"; and it was so. [Gen. 1:29–30]**

In perfect environment, man and beast were both vegetarians. We were given fruit trees to eat from (and later we would till the ground to produce some foods) and God gave the animals green plants on which to dine. There was no prohibition to meat-eating; it wasn't necessary because no one did. This does not mean that we should or should not be vegetarians. Under perfect environment, such as the millennium, it is likely that man will become a vegetarian again. Animals will likewise lose their ferocity and become vegetarians also. However, we have been given the animal for food since the fall. Whether someone chooses to eat meat or not; or to limit it in one's diet is a matter of free will, dietary consideration and personal inclination and training. It is not a spiritual issue and should never be treated as such. Fish are not mentioned; however, it is likely that they dined on various types of sea weed.

**And God examined all that He had made and it was, in fact, very good. And evening came to pass and morning came to pass; a sixth day. [Gen. 1:31]**

With this verse, we leave Genesis 1 and move into Genesis 2, which is not a new topic by any means. Had chapter divisions been inspired, then this chapter would have ended at Gen. 2:3. God has finished with the restoration of the heavens and the earth. He is not tired but He is finished. God has provided everything that was

necessary for mankind. He also provided a stage by which Satan's evil could be fully observed and manifested and righteously condemned.

---

<b>Internal Links</b>		
<b><a href="#">Beginning of Document/ Chapter Summaries</a></b>	<b><a href="#">External Links</a></b>	<b><a href="#">Genesis Chapter Links</a></b>

---

# Genesis 2

**Genesis 2** has been completely reworked and may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WP-compressed](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 2:1–2:3

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

v. 3      **The First Three Divine Institutions**

**Thus the heavens and the earth were finished; and all their populations.** [Gen. 2:1]

The verb, *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], means *to be finished, to be completed or to be accomplished*. It is in the Pual imperfect, which is passive voice and incomplete action. God, at this point is temporarily finished. He will be finished until Adam and the woman sin; then He will be involved in work. God will be finished when He says he is finished in the perfect tense. In John 19:30, immediately after our Lord had born our sins in his own body on the cross, then he will say, "It is finished" in the perfect tense. At that point, God will have accomplished for us more than we will ever realize or ever begin to appreciate.

**And by the seventh day God completed His work which he had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it, He rested from all His work which God created for making.**  
[Gen. 2:2–3]

Vv. 2–3 we see a slight break in the pattern. God speaks of the seventh day during the seventh day. The verb completed is the same one found in v. 1 except this is in the Piel imperfect, which speaks of both a completed action which is causative yet the imperfect indicates that it is an action in progress or as of yet, not complete. God did cause the creation and the restoration of the earth, and, to that point in time, it was finished. However, since God is able to see the end from the beginning, He knew that His work was not complete. Hence, the imperfect.

When it reads God *rested*, this is an anthropopathism. We do not have the ability to understand God's character and essence entirely. The Bible will sometimes use language of accommodation or take an aspect of God's character or being and express it to us in human terms. We understand the human concept and this gives us insight into God's character. God, as was mentioned, was not tired nor does He get tired. He was, however, temporarily finished. Everything which man needed was provided for him. The stage had been set for the appeal trial of Satan, who voiced a great many objections to his sentencing. Now all angels could watch as the activities on earth reveal the righteousness and perfection of God and the viciousness and evil of the fallen angels.

Here we have the word *to bless* again, and again it is in the Piel (intensive) stem. Previously, *blessing* was associated with procreation, of birds, of fish and of man (Gen. 1:22, 28). Here, procreation is not the central theme. Therefore, we have to come up with another understanding of the word *bârak*<sup>e</sup>: Gesenius suggests that in the Piel stem, this can mean *to celebrate*. It makes sense that, at the completion of a major project, and a person sit back, pop open a cold one, and admire his own work. This seems to be the sense of what we have here. For man, as time would progress, the celebration of the 7<sup>th</sup> day may include church and then sitting down in front of the game and opening up a beverage of one's favorite choice. In any case, there is a break in the routine of the work that men do, and we might understand that to be the blessing spoken of here. For God, it is sitting back and recognizing that what He has done is good; and for us, it is sitting back, after a long week's work, and perhaps recognizing the same thing (if we have done our work as unto the Lord).

Sanctification is the setting apart of something unto God. That is, it is separated from everything else for purposes related to God and His character. So it is with the seventh day. It both commemorates and looks forward to the true rest that we will enter. At this point in time, it commemorates the creation of the heavens and the earth and the restoration thereof. It is a time that man is to cease from his labors and to rest and to use the time to dwell upon our Lord. This is not the only period of time devoted to spiritual things. When our spiritual life and growth and intake of God's Word is limited to one day a week, the results are mediocre at best. We are faced with human viewpoint sixteen hours a day. In these United States, we are bombarded by television programs and advertising, magazine and newspapers and radio station broadcasts which fill us with human thought and human viewpoint. It takes but a generation to throw an entire country out of whack. We have seen that over the past few decades and the incredible increase in immorality. Things which were recognized as wrong in the 50's are seen as possibly okay in the 60's and taken for granted as being what is done in the 90's. Pre-marital sex is presented on almost any television show or movie as what people do when they become interested in one another. It is no longer even expected that the couple be in love; it is viewed as a step to falling in love. What has resulted is a complete erosion of the marriage institution, which has ruined the family, and has resulted in crime and degeneracy in our youth unprecedented in our nation. All of this results from moving away from God's Word and accepting human viewpoint. The only way we can stand up to this human viewpoint (because it is guaranteed that everyone will try to sway your opinion either through argument, ridicule or temptation), is to feed on God's Word—not weekly, but daily. And we are to be responsible to our children; not to haul them to church once a week but to train them daily in God's Word. A child does not have to be separated from the rest of the world in order to grow into a Christian adult. But, he does require doctrine everyday and he requires parents who live according to the Word, as well as teach it. And this goes back to having parents who have character and spiritual growth when they choose and commit to each other. But, I digress.

The last two verbs, *created* and *made*, *asah* and *barah*, are in the Qal perfect and the Qal infinitive. The former word looks at the action as a whole or as a completed action. God had several acts of actual creation prior to the six days of restoration and during those six days. He created the heavens and the earth and then created the populations to occupy the earth. Working with these raw materials, he made the atmosphere, man and animals from the elements of the ground, etc. The action of the infinitive can be coterminous with or follow immediately the action of the main verb. In this case, *made* followed *created*.

## Genesis 2:4–2:25

In this portion of Genesis, we will take a closer look at the sixth day of restoration. Once this day has been completed, we have another gap in history, as we found between Gen. 1:1 and 2. We do not know if Adam's age was calculated as beginning at his fall or from the day of his creation. There was a tree of life in the garden which very likely perpetuated human life; a tree that we had to be cut off from when Adam fell. Seth was born to Adam and Eve when Adam was 130 years old (Gen. 5:3), but we have no other time frame for the birth of Cain, Abel or any of Adam and Eve's other children (Gen. 5:4). The short view of this gap would be a few days to perhaps a century (and Adam and Eve produced children from age 100 on). The long view is that God calculates Adam's age from the fall, which gives us an indeterminable amount of time for man's existence in the garden. It would be nice to view this time period as lasting for centuries; however, Satan certainly observed and devised a plan quickly. Whether the next chapter chronicles his first plan or whether it was his first "successful" plan, we do not know.

**These are the Generations of [or, This is an Account of the Beginnings] the Heavens and the Earth; when they were created, in the day when Yahweh God made earth and heavens):**  
[Gen. 2:4]

This is a break in the narrative. We have covered Gen. 1:1–2:3 basically in a chronological manner. However, here, we will take a step back. It is likely that this opens up a new document or a new piece of source material. We can readily assume that Moses compiled the final version of Genesis (see the introduction), but we do not know from how many documents he worked, how much was oral tradition (remember that his father-in-law was a man of God and he certainly received some teaching from him; yet this was centuries removed from that which took place in Gen. 2). It is likely that the first portion of Genesis was given to Moses directly from God or he

received it as a part of the oral tradition. However, this beginning phrase seems to indicate that Moses is transcribing a document. My Hebrew is not strong enough to make anything else other than an hypothesis at this point, but my guess is that there will be a change of basic vocabulary at this point to correspond with the new source material.

In the Septuagint, this begins with Αὐτὴ ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς (transliterated: *Aute he Biblos geneleos ouranos kai ges*) and it should be translated *this [is the] book of the genesis [or, generations or beginnings] of heaven and earth*. This is not a word-for-word translation from the Hebrew, but it helps to give us the gist of what is being said here. For the translators millenniums ago who spoke the ancient Hebrew and desired a readable translation into the Greek, they recognized that this was the beginning of a book; or the beginning of a writing. This functions like the title of a book more than it does as a portion of the narrative. We certainly recognize here the two famous transliterated words: *Bible* and *Genesis*.

The Hebrew word, translated by the Greek *book of beginnings* is *tôwl<sup>e</sup>dôth* (תולדות) [pronounced *toh<sup>e</sup>-DOTH*], and it means *family, race, descent, history, birth, generations, origin*. It refers to what is brought into existence by someone and sometimes the results, but does not include the birth of an individual, so, in this case, this does not refer to the creation of heavens and earth as the focus. We will examine that which was brought into existence; in this case, man on *his* first day (which is why we can look at this as a beginnings of sorts). The translation I prefer, although it is, like most, more wordy than the original language: "This is an Account of the Beginnings..." This gives us the feeling that this is a document somewhat separate from the rest of the surrounding material, a document composed originally by someone other than the editor or Genesis, and carries with it a sense of beginning or origin. This is the sense in which the second or third century B.C. Jewish scholars who translated the Septuagint, seemed to take this phrase.

This verse also serves as a beginning of human history; a preface if you will to the rest of the entire Bible. We have reached back in Gen. 1:1 to eternity past to the creation of the heavens and the earth and throughout most of Gen. 1, we have examined the restoration of the earth. This verse introduces human history on earth. In one sense, it is the beginning of the Bible, inasmuch as this begins God's dealings with mankind on earth.

**Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprouted for Yahweh God had not yet sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to cultivate the ground. However, a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. [Gen. 2:5–6]**

I personally find v. 6 to be absolutely fascinating. How would or why would any author developing a false antediluvian history speak of plants being watered from a mist? The antediluvian world was very different than it is now and this is one of the chief differences; it did not rain but there was a mist which arose from the ground. The earth was surrounded by a much thicker water vapor atmosphere at this time also. If all of this is myth, then this indicates that our ancestors, not too far removed from the cave, had a very imaginative and creative sense of history. Rather than recall the days when man used to roam the earth throwing sticks and rocks at animals and hunkering down around the fire, this author speaks of a much more idyllic period of time and throws in nuances and creativity one would not expect to find in so-called *primitive* man. However, this is not a myth and man, if anything, was more brilliant and educated then than he is today. When we fantasize about the early days of man, we see cave men throwing rocks and sticks at animals and hunkering down before a fire. Those closer to the true events of history do not record such nonsense in ancient literature. Instead, they record what really happened. Even ancient myths and uninspired literature gives us a more refined view of ancient man than we have. There are certainly those who degenerated over centuries of inbreeding to colonies of less-than-civilized men who drew pictures on cave walls and behaved barbarically. One need look no further back in history than today to examine the affects of inbreeding in the hills of West Virginia or in the primitive portions of Africa to find men who have degenerated to the point of animalism. Throughout all of history, **except** for the most ancient, we find *civilized* man living in a world occupied by *savages and barbaric peoples*; and not infrequently, side-by-side.

What we have here is a different set of plants than we saw in Gen. 1:12. It is difficult, due to the ancient Hebrew, to determine exactly what kind of plants existed prior to man's cultivation of the earth but there were already plants



for food for animals and fruit trees and plants which yield their own seed. A reasonable guess might be plants used by man primarily for food or, who knows, possibly flowers? *Shrub* is a different word than used previously and *plant* is modified by *of the field* rather than by *yielding its own seed*. We view work, particularly farming, somewhat differently than Adam would have. For a person who exercises, there are periods of inactivity when one's muscles crave some exercise. This was Adam's feeling most of the time. Doing a little farming would have been a fine time of reflection and physical enjoyment, not unlike a gardener who enjoys gardening in his yard; nor is it unlike a person who plays a sport for fun. This would become work after the fall, but prior to the fall, this would be enjoyment for Adam.

**Then God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the spark [lit., breath] of lives and man became a living soul. [Gen. 2:7]**

This verse would indicate that we are made up of the same basic chemical elements as the earth is. This certainly, although not expressed in scientific language, is not the idea of some savage. It has been several millennia later when this fact was confirmed. As many have stated, the Bible is not a scientific textbook; however, when it deals with science, it deals with it accurately.

The verb for formed here is a different one than we have used before. It is the word *yâtsar* (יָצַר) [pronounced *yaw-TSAR*], and it means *to form, fashion, mold*, and several other varied meanings. Here, God is fashioning our bodies out of the elements of the earth. We do not have life until God breaths life into us. The verb breath is the Qal imperfect of *nâphach* (נָפַח) [pronounced *naw-FAHKH*], which carries with it the vision of *blowing upon a furnace*; it means *to breathe, inflame, or to blow fire upon something*. *Breath* is the Hebrew word *n<sup>o</sup>shâmâh* (נְשָׁמָה) [pronounced *n<sup>o</sup>shaw-MAW*], and it means *panting, breath, puff of air*, and even *inspiration and wisdom*. It is not farfetched to allow this to have an *electrical* connotation due to the verb and give it the translation the *spark of lives*. We have learned from science that our brains have an electrical current and the lack of that current indicates death. It is reasonable for God to have taken this lump of clay which was our bodies and breathed into the lungs oxygen and into the brain a spark. The adjective, *living*, translated often *live(s)*, is the word *chayyîm* (חַיִּים) [pronounced *khay-YEEM*], and it has to do with being alive. It is in the plural here. Man's body, soul and spirit were all activated and all became living, or, if you will forgive the cornball expression, energized. The result is that man becomes a *living being*. These words in the Hebrew are *chay* again (this time in the singular) and *nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced *NEH-fesh*], usually translated *soul*; a word applied to animals as well as to people. This is in the feminine singular and seems to refer to the entire being of man in this context.

**And Yahweh God planted a garden toward the east in Eden and there He placed man whom he had formed. [Gen. 2:8]**

Eden, transliterated from the Hebrew, means *pleasures or delights*. *Formed* in v. 7 was in the Qal imperfect, because we were looking at a process and a series of steps, whereas *formed* in v. 8 is in the Qal perfect, which is the completed action or the action is viewed upon from its entirety. Yahweh God is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the revealed member of the Godhead to us. His name did not appear in the first chapter because there was no man in the first chapter that He conversed with or had fellowship with. When this chapter begins to unfold, God has a more personal relationship with man than he did the animals or the firmament or the seas, so we now see Jesus Christ, Yahweh Elohim, doing things on our behalf. He begins by planting a garden for man to take care of in Eden. Again, this will be a pleasure for man to tend, not a chore. Then He placed man in Eden, before this garden.

**And out of the ground Yahweh God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. [Gen. 2:9]**

The Hiphil imperfect for *grow* means that God had caused the trees to begin to grow and they continued to grow. Whether they began with rings or were solid wood to begin with, I do not know. The latter would seem to be the most likely, not that it makes a great deal of difference. Two types of trees mentioned are those pleasant to look at and those which produce food which is good to eat.

Eden also contained two trees which could open a Pandora's box of interpretations. However, the concept behind these two trees is easy. The tree of life provided perpetual life for the partaker and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil allowed Adam and Eve to understand and, therefore, participate in actions that are good and evil. In innocence, or in sinless perfection, they had no need to know anything about good and evil. Good and evil were not issues in their lives. Prior to their partaking of that tree, Adam and the woman could not sin and seemed to have no fellowship with fallen angels as God allowed Satan to speak with the woman.

**Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the gardens; and from there is divided and became four rivers. The name of the one [river] is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. And the name of the second river is Gishon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.**  
[Gen. 2:10–14]

The original author of this portion of God's Word was obviously no savage but a person who had an appreciation for things aesthetic, geographic and agrarian. We have details here that had to come from a person who knew this antediluvian area. We do not know if it was Adam or Adam's description to his sons who passed it on, but this is not the kind of information which one would necessarily fabricate. One's first reaction is a desire to know what these proper nouns mean; however, although man certainly began with a full vocabulary, probably far superior to ours, these are proper names given to these rivers and lands by Adam or his early descendants and likely do not have a meaning. If anything meanings have sprung from these words rather than vice versa. In Havilah we have mentioned that there were a lot of precious stones. Again, the original author is one who appreciates things of beauty. I would not be willing to try and designate where these places would be found today. The world-wide flood occurred when the earth was likely less mountainous than it is today; since the flood and the rage of the flood waters, the terrain has probably undergone some remarkable changes. The flood likely caused a great shifting of the earth's plates, the formation of mountains through volcanic activity and plate shifting and, as a result, I believe that the geography of the antediluvian civilization and the postdiluvian civilization possess more dissimilarities than similarities. I do not know enough about geography to say that this is when the continental drift occurred (if such a thing occurred) but I doubt that the areas identified here and later in the Bible are the same. On the other hand, it is equally likely that persons who possessed a knowledge or a record of the antediluvian civilization used these names again to designate new areas of land, as has been man's habit whenever he conquers a new land.

My educated guess, for what it is worth, is that the rivers mentioned here had names that were retained after the flood. However, because of the massive destruction of a worldwide flood, It is unlikely that we are speaking of the very same Tigris and Euphrates rivers as found today.

On the other hand, there is an argument to be made for some of these rivers and lands to coincide. The reason that I would make this guess is that God has chosen a particular plot of land and has given that to the Jews as a piece of real estate forever. Would it not be logical that this piece of real estate has, in a sense, sentimental value to our Lord as the area of the Garden of Eden and the area first occupied by Adam and the woman. Since the middle East, in many ways, seems to be the center of the earth and likely the original populated area (at least since the flood), I would say that these are the very same rivers of today. The other two rivers have either been renamed (if they are still in existence) and the paths of the rivers have certainly been changed dramatically because of the flood. This would, of course, put the original Garden of Eden somewhere between Israel and the Persian Gulf.

The use of the words *one* (not *first*), *second*, *third* and *fourth* are the same as is found in Gen. 1:5,8,13 and 19; the first four days of restoration. The rivers were not necessarily built in a specific order nor was one preeminent; the author just began with one river and then described the others. The lack of detail on the other four lands suggests that the original author of the text from which Moses wrote was not an eyewitness but one who heard this from someone who heard this from someone who heard it from someone who may have been an eyewitness. A much less likely possibility is that Moses simply edited out a lot of text at this point (I am of the opinion that, if Moses did write the book of Genesis, it was from either existing documents or existing information at his time. .

**Then Yahweh God took the man and placed him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to guard it.** [Gen. 2:15]

The word for *take* is the common Hebrew word *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] in the Qal imperfect. This is simple action and only a portion of the action is viewed or the action is incomplete. This word can mean anything from *to take one in marriage to take and carry along to take possession of*. It has a widespread usage. Here, nothing more than the simple word *take* is necessary. So from wherever Adam was created; from there he was taken to the garden of Eden. The Hiphil imperfect of *nûwach* (וָנַח) [pronounced *NOO-ahkh*], and it means *to deposit, to lay down, to cast down, to place*. The action is causative and a portion of the action is examined.

The last two words in this verse which designate man's responsibilities are both in the Qal infinitive construct; which is simple action and is similar to our infinitive or gerund phrase; it can function as a verbal noun. The first of these words is *ʿâbad* (עָבַד) [pronounced *gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHD*] and it means *to work, or to serve, or to slave or to labor*. The final word in Gen. 2:15 is a very common Hebrew word; it is found in Gen. 3:24 and it means *to guard, to watch, to preserve or to keep*. Dominion and responsibility are inferred here. This is the first recorded responsibility given Adam. God is not going to allow Adam to be idle. This is not in God's plan even in innocence. We, as fallen people, may not have a grasp of what is occurring, but God has just given Adam the equivalent to the keys to the Porsche. Exercising the body is not an unpleasant thing to do, nor is gardening or watching things grow and multiply. To us in our fallen state, since this has become work, it carries a different meaning. However, this was one of the many things which God provided for Adam to do.

**And Yahweh God commanded Adam, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it, for in the day that you eat from it, in dying you will die [or, in a state of death, you will begin dying]."** [Gen. 2:16–17]

The first word in v. 16 is *command* and it is in the Piel imperfect. The Piel stem could be intensive and it could be completed action without regard to how it came about. Being first in the verse indicates that this command is important. In fact, this is the first recorded words of God to man following man's creation. This indicates that this is most important. From day one of his life on earth, Adam was given a very simple command. One tree was off limits and God even gave Adam a reason for it being off limits. Adam is warned that he will die and *dying* is found twice, a doubling of the verb, a Hebraism. It is first found in the Qal infinitive absolute and then in the Qal imperfect. An infinitive absolute stands alone as a noun, verb or an adverb. Usually, it takes the place of a noun. It can be used to intensify the meaning of the word, as it most certainly does here, but it can also state a state of being. We could translate this, *in a state of dying, you die; or in a state of death, you will begin dying*. . This describes exactly what will happen to Adam when he eats from the tree. He will immediately go into a state of spiritual death; that is, he will not be able to have fellowship with God on his own initiative. God must seek him out and begin the fellowship. So Adam will find himself immediately spiritually dead, cut off from God in several ways. However, this will not be the end of the curse. He will also begin a state of decay and physical degeneration which will eventuate in human death.

This establishes a parallelism between man's state of innocence (or, more properly, perfection) and man's fallen state. As a perfect person, Adam could only do one thing wrong; there was only one act of free will which would cause Adam to lose his fellowship with God and that was choosing to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In man's fallen state, there is only one decision of merit which will affect man's relationship to God and that is man's decision concerning another tree, the tree that Jesus Christ died on. Rev. 22:2 and 14 both speak of the *tree of life*; the Greek word used is *ξύλον* (*xulon*), and it means *tree, cross, wood, or stocks*. The exact same word is found in I Pet. 2:24 **And He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for "by His wounds were you healed."**<sup>18</sup> See also Acts 10:39 13:29 Gal. 3:13. All other decisions for man in his fallen state do not affect his relationship with God one way or the other.

**Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper in the sight of [and corresponding] to him."** [Gen. 2:18]

<sup>18</sup> Isa. 53:5

God is not speaking to Himself nor is He speaking to Adam. We have God speaking throughout the first few chapters of Genesis. It is one member of the Godhead speaking to another member. The reason for speaking is simple: there is an entire angelic creation, both fallen and elect angels who are on hand to witness all of this. At one point in time, the earth was their personal stomping ground. When Satan fell and took a third of the angels with him, God froze the earth in an ice pack. Now it has been thawed and the angels are intently observing the transpiring of these events. God narrates what is occurring.

At this point in time, I do not believe that it is still the sixth day.<sup>19</sup> We have a lot going on, which includes all of the animals being named, and then the building of the woman. God has made the mammals and other land animals and then He created Adam.

If it is the 6<sup>th</sup> day, then the animals would have had to be made almost instantaneous (easy for God to do); then God would have been bringing animals to Adam quickly to name, even yet while Adam is learning what to do in the garden. This strikes me as being very rushed for this all to be the 6<sup>th</sup> day.

It would make more sense that God has taken Adam to the garden which He, God, had prepared several days previous. He outlines Adam's responsibilities, particularly the mandate not to eat of the tree of knowing good and evil. God has designed Adam so that he is brilliant; although, perhaps, not as brilliant as angelic creation. It is likely that God created man inferior to angels in every respect to teach the fallen and the elect angels.

*To make* is from the Qal imperfect of 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*], which means *to do or to make* and is found in Gen. 1:7,25 and 2:2. This is a clear-cut example of a Qal stem used as a future tense. What God will design for man is a *helper, or a person who will assist, relieve and help man*. God is spoken of as a *help* in Ex. 18:4. *Neged* (נֶגֶד) [pronounced *NEH-ged*] is an preposition which refers to something which is conspicuous or something which is always in front of. It is translated *before the sight of, or in front of, or corresponding to*. Even though God has decided that He will make this helper for Adam, God does not do that immediately. God first brings to Adam members of the animal kingdom for Adam to name. Because Adam is a genius, he will develop names for all of the animals as a result of his intelligence and free will. Adam will recognize that there are a lot of animals but he will certainly realize that there are no animals with which he can fellowship.

**And out of the ground Yahweh God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and He brought them to man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.**  
[Gen. 2:19–20]

Yâtsar (יָצַר) [pronounced *yaw-TSAR*] is the verb for fashioning and molding and here. The Qal imperfect is used here for the building or the fashioning of the animals from the elements of the ground. We are use to a tense system which incorporates time into most verbs and the Hebrew does not. Context determines the time of the action; as we have just seen two Qal imperfect verbs used as a past tense and as a future tense. Like mankind, most animal groupings proceed from a single set of parents. For instance, the extremely divergent dog family has but one ancestor. These are the animals which Adam was naming. This process took perhaps two to four hours as God paraded the animals and birds before Adam. This is an expansion of Gen. 1:28. Adam is a genius, and although he is but a few hours old, he is able to devise names for these animals from his own intellect and free will. He is enthused about the animals, the garden, his fellowship with Jesus Christ, but he notices that there is no one on earth who is like himself.

**So Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept. The He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place and the Yahweh God fashioned [or built] the rib which he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.** [Gen. 2:21–22]

<sup>19</sup> There is some scholarly disagreement here; some believe that God created the female within the man's soul and Gen. 1:27 actually refers to the man, singular, only. The Hebrew has man in the plural in that verse (which, certainly could still allow for the woman as part of the man). However, the simple reading of Gen. 1:26–27 seems to indicate that the man and the woman were both created on the same day.

So far, there has only been one designation for Adam (apart from *male* in Gen. 1:27) in these chapters of Genesis: Adam. Adam is found in Gen. 1:27 2:5,7,8,16,18,19,20,21 and 22. It is translated both *man* and *Adam*; nevertheless, it is the same word. The word for woman is 'ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced *eesh-SHAW*] and this is the first time that it is used. Its usage will be explained in the next verse. This passage is simultaneously the first operation and the first nap (although it is more of a mid-morning nap rather than an afternoon nap).

What God chose to do here is interesting. God did not create Adam and the woman simultaneously as He did all of the animal creation. He did create them with two different sexes, unlike the angels who are essentially all male (Gen. 6 and Matt. 22:30). The angels have already seen the two different sexes in the animal kingdom, which the fallen angels probably viewed as quaint. Very likely there was not enough time to observe the two sexes to form much of an opinion; however, it would be a matter of semi-interesting speculation if God had originally created the male of the animal kingdom as the male is often today; the most attractive and flashy of the two sexes (e.g., the lion or the peacock). However, the creation of the woman was an event, as was the creation of the man. It was not a matter of a sudden creation in either case. The man was formed or fashioned from the elements of the earth as a potter would form or fashion something out of clay; and then God breathed into him the spark of lives (Gen. 2:7). Enough time was given to this for the angels to observe man's creation. Then, as man is naming the animals and having an aesthetic experience observing the garden, the angels noticed that there is no one else for man to have fellowship with. They were created with other angels. The animals were created with other animals and each specie (I hope that I am using this correctly) had a counterpart in the opposite sex. However, man did not; and both Adam and the angels noticed this.

God spent even more time with the creation of the woman than He did with the creation of Adam. He took the woman out of Adam; not unlike cloning today; and from these cells, built a woman. For hundreds of years, those of an interest in science might have made light of this, thinking it silly to make a woman from the bone of a man; however, as time goes on, we have found that throughout the entire body, the cells carry a blueprint for the entire person, making this act much more rational and understandable. The verb, in the Qal imperfect, is *bânâh* (בָּנָה) [pronounced *baw-NAWH*], and it means *to build* and is most often used with the construction of buildings. At this point in time, God created the most beautiful creature that He had created (this is my opinion). Satan was created dazzling and attractive, but the woman was breathtakingly beautiful. Even the angels found her beautiful; and the fallen angels found her desirable (as we will see in Gen. 6). God set two precedents here: (1) the oft-quoted, *God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve*; meaning God created man to spend the bulk of his time with a woman, rather than with other men; and that relationship was special, exclusive and permanent. (2) God brought Adam's right woman, his perfect mate, to him. Adam did not have to go and find her. There are a lot of things that we must, as people, go out and seek. Often, once we have completed our education and/or training, we must go out into the world and seek employment. Only a few have employment brought to them. However, we do not have to go out looking for our right woman. We do not have to comb the single's ads, go to bars or single's events in order to find our right woman. God set the precedent by bringing them together Himself. There are several commands directly pertaining to marriage and the right man-right woman relationship; none of them involve going out and finding that person.

Why the rib and why do we have all of our ribs today? The latter question is easy: if you cut off a finger and then sire a child, the child will be born with all of his digits intact. The former question is more difficult to answer. There was a famous saying which went with this which had to do with the woman being created as man's equal close to his heart, but this is not the case. The woman was created second in command. Adam was to rule the household. This does not mean that the woman is inferior to the man. I have worked in several places where my boss, the authority above me, was not as intelligent as I was. They still had the authority over me. Inferiority or superiority of any inherent characteristic was never an issue; they were the chiefs and I was the Indian. Immediate context does not reveal Adam's position of authority. This is found later in Gen. 3:17 where blame is placed upon Adam for allowing the woman to call the shots. Satan will attack the human race through the woman, because if Adam orders her to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then there will be two non-issues: (1) Adam would have taken the fruit, like the woman, under deception; and (2) the woman would be following the authority of the man—in either case, we do not have a clear-cut, free-will decision to disobey God. Also, Paul goes back to creation, prior to the fall, in order to establish the man's authority over the woman (1Cor. 11:3–11).

I should say something about morality in the state of innocence, or perfection, at this point. There was absolutely nothing that the man and the woman could do which would be considered immoral or wrong, except to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Apart from that, there were no moral issues and there was no old sin nature. What choices they would make and what choices their subsequent progeny would make, has God allowed procreation in the garden, we can only speculate. However, it is clear that there was no act of sin or immorality which they could do together in the garden. A system of morality and right and wrong had to be devised after the fall. This system changed somewhat from dispensation to dispensation. We will find that out in Gen. 4. In fact, one of the issues on trial is the concept of right and wrong and who determines what is right and what is wrong. Clearly, God is the final authority in these matters; but this is certainly one of the objections brought up at Satan's appeal trial. We, as individuals and as communities and nations, are faced every moment with decisions of morality and right and wrong. God has given us a system of morality for both the believer and the unbeliever; systems of authority to be obeyed, laws and regulations to be observed. Satan has also set up his own system of right and wrong. For any dispensation, there is but one system of right and wrong. However, Satan develops several systems of right and wrong for us to choose from; among them, situational ethics, free love, don't trust anyone over thirty, finding the good present in all religions, etc. In my lifetime, I have seen public opinion swayed from monogamous, lifetime marriages wherein sex occurred after the marriage and the commitment (an eye-opener to the incredibly change in mores can be seen in the James Cagney film is it *Yankee Doodle Dandy*???) (I have to check this out) to a short period of time where sex was seen as an expression of love (at least by the female) in or out of marriage to the eighties and nineties where people meet, are physically attracted, have sex, and then, sometimes, fall in love. Afterward, they may or may not get married. Man is only responsible to God for his moral decisions as God has revealed these to man in, what was in previous dispensations, partial revelation. I need to qualify that statement, but I am not certain as to how to do it. Cain committed many mental attitude sins toward Abel and then killed Abel. These were all wrong; however, God actually protected Cain after committing this murder. When I get to Gen. 4, I will cover the relationship between revelation, morality, right and wrong as it spans the various generations in more detail.

**And the man said,**

**"This who now at last, bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;  
to this shall be called woman because she was taken out of man." [Gen. 2:23]**

Man does what God has been having him do all along. He has been naming all the animals as God brought them to him. However, seeing the woman for the first time causes the man to become poetical and lyrical. He is inspired and we have the first recorded poetry in this verse. God did not have to tell Adam about the operation or the origin of woman; Adam recognizes immediately that the woman was not formed out of the ground, as he was, but directly from himself. Although the Bible does not mention it, this is love at first sight. Adam begins here with physical attraction (this is a precedent; most of us initially date or go out with people to whom we are physically attracted) and he will fall into total soul love in a very short time with the woman. Just seeing her inspires him to wax poetic, however, also somewhat of a precedent.

To cover the Hebrew; man's first word is zô'th (זֹה) [pronounced *zoth*], a word used as a demonstrative pronoun and as an adverb; it is in the feminine singular and can be translated in a variety of ways: *here, this*, and in poetry it is used as a relative pronoun: *wherein, that which, this who*. There is no verb in the first verse, denoting excitement and great passion. Pa'am (פֶּאֶם) [pronounced *PAH-gahm*], the second word in Adam's first recorded speech has even a wider range of meanings: *beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, once, this once, now at length, now at last*. Apparently, this is a Hebrew word whose meaning changed markedly over the centuries. A reading of any passage in the KJV will reveal to the reader that all languages change; the KJV is but four hundred years and the Hebrew found in Genesis predates the Hebrew in Malachi by over a thousand years; perhaps much more since Moses was writing from source material which predated him by many centuries. The latter translation fits the context. Adam has just named hundreds of animals, relating them to a preexisting vocabulary which came with his creation. He has been amused and entertained by what God has brought to him, but nothing was a counterpart to him. The second verse begins with a preposition + zô'th. There was no "Me Tarzan, you Jane." Adam had a fully functioning vocabulary in a number of different realms. He was created a human genius. Even though this word for man, 'yish (אִישׁ) [pronounced *eesh*] has not been used yet in the Bible, it was a part of Adam's vocabulary and it, unlike the word *Adam*, which can be applied to mankind, refers specifically to the male with an

emphasis upon sexual and relational differences to the female. Adam therefore names her ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced *eesh-SHAW*]; or, more simply, ishshah, which came to mean *woman as distinguished from a man*, but at that time was not a word. It has a more poetic and softer sound than *ish*. The first verb, *called*, is in the Niphal, and this is the simple passive sense where the woman receives the action of the verb; she receives the designation *isha*. *Taken from* is in the Pual perfect, which is an accomplished, intensive act in the passive sense.

V. 24 seems parenthetical. If you read v. 23 and then v. 25, they appear to work together without v. 24. V. 24 begins with an adverb which refers back to the preceding verse. It can mean *so, therefore, in such circumstances, for this reason, that being so*. This is an addition or a footnote. It could have been added by Moses, but it was more likely added by the original author or by one who copied the source material. Make no mistake—this is a part of God's Word and fully inspired—this verse sets and emphasizes a precedent.

**[For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cling to (have sex with) his wife; and they shall become one flesh] [Gen. 2:24]**

R.B. Thieme, who was my pastor for over two decades, devised some peculiar vocabulary and designations, which, although they were different from what had been used in the past, essentially taught what diligent pastors have been teaching for centuries. One concept which he develops is the *divine institution*. This is a structure which has been designed by God and will exist throughout all of time; at least through the millennium. Three of these divine institutions have been presented so far:

### The First Four Divine Institutions

**Volition:** God has decreed that man will be a free, moral sphere in this universe. This is discerned readily from Gen. 2:16–17, wherein God states a prohibition and a penalty (which indicates God's sovereign desire in this matter) and we see that Adam disobeyed that mandate in Gen. 3:6, indicating that man truly has free will. God created man with the ability, but not the desire, to disobey Him. This makes Adam a free moral sphere. I know that this seems like an overemphasis, but there are some Christians who do not believe that we have free will but that we are strictly puppets of God's sovereignty.

**Work:** Fundamental to Adam's life was work. God did not make Adam to just be a layabout, sitting under a shady tree, by the river, sipping wine coolers.

**Marriage:** God designed for Adam, and, by precedence, almost all other men, a woman. There is a perfect time in which God will bring this woman to us and there are ways to ruin this relationship before it even begins, but that is the topic of an entire study. However, the principle is that God has designed a particular man for a particular woman and vice versa and if we wait on God, He will bring that person to us. The result is a lifetime relationship which separates us from the family that we were born into. The husband carries the authority in this relationship.

**Family:** The fourth divine institution is family; that is, two people marry and have children. God designed for those two people to raise these children and God will give certain restrictions, mandates and directives in raising these children. The parents are the authority and the children are under their authority. The children, when they leave the home; which is often to be done at marriage, at that point leave the authority of their parents.

The fifth divine institution is nation, which will not occur for quite awhile.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We do not know who originally wrote this, but even if it was Adam, he still wrote this in retrospect, which means that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he would be allowed to edit as he saw fit. At this point in time, when examining the woman being brought to the man by God, the author points out that a precedent has been set and that precedent is that the new family unit is separate and distinct from the original family units. There is often still ongoing relationships, love and social activity, but the authority which once existed between the parents of the

husband and the parents of the wife over the husband and the wife is no longer in effect. At the time when God brought the woman to the man, there was no family, no mother or father. Even the angels do not marry nor are they given in marriage (Matt. 22:30). In fact, the angels appear to be all *males*. So, at this time, there is no family and no precedence for a family. However, the writer (or inspired copyist) stopped at this point and inserted the pertinent information that this is why the man leaves his family and cleaves to his wife.

The words for *man* and *woman* are the same ones found in the previous verse. *Cleave* is the Qal perfect of the Hebrew word *dâbaq* (דָּבַק) [pronounced *daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHK*]. This word means *to cling, to cleave, to hold fast to, to keep close*. In this case it refers to a union which is both permanent, total and sexual. The perfect tense tells us that this is a completed action That indicates the permanence. *And they shall become one flesh* modifies the meaning of *cleave* here and indicates that we are talking, at least in part, about sex. *Become* is in the Qal perfect; again indicating that this is a permanent action on the part of the man and the woman.

**And the man and his woman were both naked and were not ashamed [or confused or disappointed].** [Gen. 2:25]

The divine precedence in marriage is set in both subtle and obvious ways. Notice the possessive pronoun found here. It is the man and *his* woman. There is no word for husband and wife in any of these verses—this is Adam and his *ishshah*. The v. 24 insert indicates that v. 23 set the precedence for marriage and v. 25 indicates that this is a unit from the beginning. Whether there is a marriage ceremony or not is unimportant. What is important is that this is a permanent, lifetime relationship.

The last word is the Hithpael imperfect of *bôwsh* (בוש) [pronounced *bôsh*]. The Hithpael is reflexive action in the Piel (intensive stem); that is, the man and the woman act upon themselves (or, in this case, due to the negative, they do not act upon themselves). The word means to be *ashamed, disappointed, disconcerted, to feel shame, to be confounded*. When we sin or fail, we are often disconcerted or we are ashamed of what we have done or confused by what we did. We may feel humiliated or disgraced in public. Adam and his woman felt none of these things. There is no indication that they are aware of the angels watching them, but they are aware of Jesus Christ in the garden and they are aware of each other; but in a state of innocence, there is no guilt or disappointment because they have done nothing wrong. They were created naked and they have no need of privacy. This is not a call to nudism. Contextually, they are innocent and in the Garden of Eden. No nudist colony can remove the old sin nature which is inside of us. We cannot recapture the Garden of Eden by some overt change which we make. We are not one step closer to perfection because we can wander about in public without clothing. This is a state of being which comes with perfection and innocence.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---



# Genesis 3

**Genesis 3** has been completely reworked and may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WP-compressed](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 3:1–24

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

- v. 3      [Satan's Appearance](#)
- v. 16     [Scar Tissue of the Soul](#)
- v. 24     [The Cherubim of God](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 3 brings the fall of man. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, we do not know how long this state of innocence lasted. It is possible that man's fall occurred within the week. I like to think of it as a long time; a decade or a century, but that is personal romanticism. Because we cannot put a time on the birth of Cain relative to man's total existence, we cannot get a fix on this time period. The best we can do is speculate: Adam is 130 years old when he sired Seth (Gen. 5:5), who is not necessarily his third child and not necessarily even his third male child (although that is most likely). If Adam had sired Cain and Abel and daughters within the previous decade or two and if his age was calculated upon his beginning in the garden, then man may have spent a century in the Garden of Eden in a state of innocence. Adam and the woman had settled down into some sort of a routine and that routine sometimes included time away from each other, even in perfect environment without two old sin natures. They had both been carefully instructed by Jesus Christ in the garden not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Perfect environment for them included being taught knowledge (or, Bible doctrine if you will) by Jesus Christ in the garden, time together and time alone, sex, eating, enjoying the view and no children.

The angels and Satan had the earth under observation. Satan is intelligent beyond what we can imagine, although he is not omniscient. We can be certain that he carefully planned his attack. We do not know how many other attacks which he made upon the man and the woman. He had one objective, however, and that was to get man and the woman to sin against God. He and his demon troops had all been sentenced to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire and he appealed this decision. He was certainly filled with rage and jealousy against man and this idyllic existence. First of all, the man enjoyed sex with his right woman, something which Satan never had the opportunity to do. Then, although man was weak and stupid by comparison, he enjoyed a life far better than Satan would ever enjoy. See the doctrine of the **Fall of Satan**. What was Satan's objective here? Very likely, he wanted to show how unfair God would be to Adam and the woman when they sinned just as God had been so unfair to Satan for his sin. Satan judged God's objectives, motives and decisions based upon his own fallen nature and made false conclusions based upon his false assumptions. At this time, Satan had no idea how long human history would last; how long until he would be cast into the Lake of Fire; nor did he know that God would come to earth as a man and pay for Adam's sin and every subsequent sin of mankind. Satan, in his arrogance, just wanted to stir up trouble. It would seem likely that Satan even sat back and observed for a time being, hoping that Adam would, of his own free will, choose against God and take from the forbidden tree.

Satan enters into the body of the serpent (possibly an extinct animal; more than likely it is a snake since the same word continues to occur in the Old Testament). Or Satan takes on the form of a serpent. Possibly God does not allow Satan to manifest himself bodily to the woman at this point because he is a creature of tremendous beauty and he has a marvelous personality and he would have charmed the woman into whatever course of action he chose due to his incredible presence. However, we do have a precedence set here: Satan begins by using demon possession and speaking in tongues. The serpent takes on the characteristics of Satan.

**Now the serpent was more crafty [subtle or cunning] than any beast in the wild which Yahweh God has made. He then said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from every tree of the garden'?" [Gen. 3:1]**

All animals have some sort of intelligence, but the serpent was crafty because this is a manifestation of Satan (or in the alternative, a serpent indwelt by Satan). There is possibly even a bit of mockery and tongue-in-cheek here. The serpent is even smarter and craftier than the other members of the animal kingdom. This is a status achieved by Satan: craftier than the other animals. The word for *crafty* is 'ārûwm (אָרוֹם) [pronounced *gaw-ROOM*], and it means *subtle, crafty, shrewd, cunning, sly and sensible*. Whether it is used in a good sense or a bad sense is determined by context. It is found in Proverbs in a good sense. Satan's attack was certainly subtle. He attacks the woman. There are no threats, no attempt to cause her fear (which might not have been possible). He just talks to the woman; explores the thoughts of her soul. He wants to know how she *feels*. "This is your garden, honey, and God has not allowed you to eat from every tree? Now, just how do you feel about that?" This recorded passage is not every conversation that the woman had with Satan nor is it the entirety of this particular conversation. Since there is no indication that any animal ever spoke (nor do they have the vocal cords which have the ability to speak as we do), Satan then must have been allowed by God to either alter the vocal cords or to *throw his voice*, as it were. The first thing out of his mouth was certainly not about the tree. He had to talk to the woman so that she would not be frightened or confused because an animal was speaking to her and then he needed to get her confidence. This possibly involved several conversations prior to this time; or this could be midway through his first conversation with her. Satan is exceptionally brilliant and his attack on perfect environment had to be clever. He does not go to the man. He spots a vulnerability in the woman and exploits that vulnerability. He also has noticed that Adam is vulnerable through the woman. However, at this point, Satan may not care about Adam's decision. Whether Adam follows her in sin or whether he remains in a state of perfection; either outcome would very likely fit into Satan's incompletely formed plan. He just wants at least one of these creatures who occupy his one-time realm, to fall and sin against God. Satan speaking is in the Qal imperfect, indicating an ongoing conversation; however, God *said* is in the Qal perfect, implying a finality and a mandate which may not be altogether fair.

*Indeed* is the Hebrew word 'aph (אֵף) [pronounced *ahf*] and it is a conjunction which introduces a new, emphatic thought. It can be translated *also, indeed, really*. Thieme renders this conjunction *is it really true that*. Satan does not even refer to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He will allow the woman to bring it up. He is speaking as though he has heard this rumor and he's just curious whether or not it is true. The woman answers the serpent:

**And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or else you will die.'" [Gen. 3:2–3]**

The woman reveals that either she has not been listening or she has had a doctrinal breakthrough which she has been dying to share with someone. God never said anything about touching the tree. This reminds me of the story Garrison Keilor would tell about the pump handle in back of the grade school in winter. If you put your tongue on it, your spit would freeze and you might have to stay there all winter. Therefore, the younger kids, fully aware of these consequences would not go back there unless they had to, and if they did, they would keep their mouths firmly shut at all times. So the woman thought that she had better not even touch it. The property of death was not inherent in the tree but in her volition with respect to the tree. She does not mention the title of the tree, and she is even a little confused on the doctrine of what will actually happen. She does not say *in dying you will die*, she merely says that you will be *dying*. This is in the imperfect voice, so that incomplete action is implied. Satan knows that he has her now. She has misquoted God's Word. She does not even have the gist of it. This indicates that she is not paying close attention in Bible class. Even Satan will correctly quote God's Word (and then negate it).

**And the serpent said to the woman, "It is not true that in a state of death that you will begin to die!" [Gen. 3:4]**

Dying is used twice in this verse. It is used in exactly the way Yahweh Elohim used the verb in Gen. 2:17. It is first found in the Qal infinitive absolute along with a negative, and then in the Qal imperfect second masculine plural. An infinitive absolute acts as a verbal noun and it can be used to intensify a meaning or to complement a meaning. We have come to a full understanding of spiritual and temporal death, and therefore translate these two words *in a state of death, you will begin to die*. Satan adds a negative to the Qal infinitive absolute, and could be clumsily translated, *It is not true that in a state of death you will die*. This could be shortened to *in dying, you will not die*. Note also that when God spoke these words originally to Adam, the suffix was the second masculine singular; however, when Satan speaks to the woman, he uses the second masculine plural, telling her that neither she nor Adam would die. Thieme, at one time, gave the rather free translation, *"the wages of sin isn't death, honey; eat"*. Satan continues lying to the woman:

**"For God knows that in the day you [both] eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** [Gen. 3:5]

This is the beginning of false religion. God has a clearly revealed will here. There is no mistaking what He has told Adam and the woman. Just as there is no mistaking what we are told over and over again in the New Testament: *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved*. I have put together roughly 4–5 pages of verses which say basically that. That is probably the most basic mandate of the Bible yet cults and religion deny it; they deny the Lord who bought them, and substitute in a set of works. Adam and the woman had one negative mandate to test their volition, and it was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan, as the father of religion, ignores or distorts God's revealed truth and offers in replacement his own works or theology. He has told the woman that she will come to be as smart as God. He does not deny that the tree will provide the knowledge of good and evil; but that the result of knowing good and evil will be different than that which God outlined.

Let me offer an analogy: parents will protect their children as long as they can from the way that the world is. There is no need to expose them to obscene language or to profanity; no need for them to be confused by excessive violence or by the misuse of sex; no need for them to be faced with drugs. Parents will try to keep these things from their children as long as possible, even though these things are found out there in the real world. It is impossible to keep a child from these things for their entire life because we do live in the devil's world and we are faced with his distortions of God's provisions daily; however, most parents, if they could protect their children from association with any of these things up until the child is 14 or 18 or even 21, they would. There is no need for our children to be faced at a young age, in innocence, as it were, to inappropriate language, violence, sex and drugs. We certainly, as the time comes, give outlines of mandates concerning these things. This is analogous to Yahweh God in the garden with Adam and the woman. They had no need to be faced with Satan's fall or Satan's system or Satan's religions. God had provided them a perfect, idyllic existence in the Garden of Eden. They had everything they needed and what Satan did or thought was not an issue to them; just as the immorality or viciousness of humankind is not an issue to a four-year-old child..

Although speaking just to the woman, Satan includes the man in on these conversations. All of the second person references and suffixes are in the plural. He said, "You [plural] will be like God [plural]; knowers of good and evil." As Thieme has said many times; the woman did not become as smart as God; she instead found out how smart God was. So the woman goes up and inspects the tree carefully. In one verse we find a change in life as has never been seen since in human history. In the space of a few minutes, the bodies of Adam and the woman will change, the world will change, and corruption, degeneration and decay will become a part of life.

**When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it [was] desirable to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to cause one to be wise; she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her man with her and he ate.** [Gen. 3:6]

The word for *good* is the same one as is found in Gen. 1:10,12, 18. In fact, so is the word for *saw* or *observed*, which is found in the Qal imperfect in all three verses. What is different is that God observed that it *was* (Qal perfect tense) and there is no corresponding verb in v. 6. The perfect tense is a completed action and what He created was completely and totally good. The woman does not use this verb. She examines the tree and notes

to herself, *good for food*. The word translated a *delight* or *pleasant* to the eyes is ta'āvâh (תַּאֲוָה) [pronounced *tah-uh-VAW*] and it means more than just *pleasant*. It means *desirable* or *something which causes lust or longing for*. Strong's #8378 BDB #16. There is a similar (in meaning) verb found in the Niphal (passive voice) of *châmad* (חָמַד) [pronounced *khaw-MAHD*]. It means *to be desired*. Strong's #2530 BDB #326. Both words can be used in a good and a bad sense.

The woman, after careful study of the tree and the fruit, takes the fruit<sup>20</sup> and eats. She suddenly realizes that she has done something wrong. She suddenly has a conscience and recognizes that there is good and evil in this world. This acted upon her as sin acts upon us. Our fellowship with God is immediately broken when we sin. Her fellowship with God was broken immediately at the eating of this fruit. She has several options before her, but her option of choice is to find the man and put him into the same boat as she is. She has been deceived, although God made it clear as to what was acceptable and what was not. She broke the only negative commandment of God and is in a state of confusion.

Satan, upon seeing man in the Garden of Eden, with the woman, in perfect environment and in a state of bliss, chose to do whatever he could to cause man to fall; to be in the same position that he is in. The woman will react to her own fall the same way. Rather than go to Adam and discuss this, she brings the fruit to him. This may have been the first ultimatum given by a woman to a man and it may have been an unspoken ultimatum. God does not reveal this to us. However, there is no confusion with Adam. He has not been deceived. He knows exactly what the issue is. Any man who has ever been head over heels in love understands what Adam does in this verse. There is a clear-cut choice for him. He has seen animal after animal when he named them and recognized that there was no one in the animal kingdom for him. It was when God brought the woman to him that he realized and recognized his lifetime counterpart. There are no singles bars; there are no other options that he is aware of; there is one woman for Adam; woman that he is in love with and desires beyond anything else in the world, and she stands before him holding the fruit that Yahweh God has specifically told him not to eat. He knows that the woman has partaken of the fruit. Even if the woman did not say a thing to Adam, the very fact of her holding the fruit before him has told him that she has eaten from the tree. Now he has to decide between his creator and what God created for him. He has to decide between the love of his life and Jesus Christ in the garden. He does not fully understand the outcome of what he is about to do, but he does recognize that he has a choice that is clear-cut: Jesus Christ or the woman. Adam chose; as federal head of the human race, he chose for all of us at that time. Just as when a president declares war on a country and congress approves, we are at war with that country because they act as our federal heads. Adam was so much in love with the woman and was so worried that he might lose her, that he chose her above everything else.

We all have free will and we all make choices; some which have devastating effect on our lives for decades. Those who at a young age became involved with drugs or illicit sex have caused themselves problems with far-reaching results. With drugs, there are portions of our brains which might not ever function up to par ever again. With pre-marital sex, we might lose out on the right person designed by God for us. We might be out fornicating with some inconsequential person while our right person persistently is knocking on our door. After awhile, that person gives up and we are left with emptiness and swinging at the wind. Adam had no concept as to the long-term effect of his sin. He did know his Creator, however, and God told Adam emphatically not to eat of the tree. There are certain mistakes that we make with our lives; even fundamental mistakes that we make after salvation; after our teen years. There have been wonderful marriages and families destroyed by adultery. One of the purposes of filling our souls with doctrine is that not only do we know what the prohibitions are but we know why and the rationale behind these prohibitions. We have a better grasp on the longevity of our mistakes and might chose for once not to make stupid mistakes because we have a well-rounded view of what the sin is and the results of that sin. Certainly, the more we know about God's Word, the more prohibitions that we learn; but we also learn why these are prohibitions. It is much easier to listen when someone tells you that something is hot and that you will burn yourself than it is to find that out first-hand.

With a human conscience and being out of fellowship with God, Adam and the woman begin acting in accordance with their new found conscience. I hate to make this analogy because it is not an exact analogy, but dogs do not

---

<sup>20</sup> Zodhiates mentions that the Latin word for *apple* is *malam* and the Latin word for *evil* is *malum*, their similarity possibly accounting for the thought that this was an apple.

realize that they are naked and this never bothers them whether they are in a crowd or alone. Adam and the woman were naked and it did not bother them to be that way before the animal kingdom, before Jesus Christ, before each other; and, if they were aware of the angelic kingdom, before the angels. Clothes were not an issue to them. This is not an argument for nudism. That is not the point. Nudists recognize that they are naked. Even a nudist would be embarrassed to be au natural in certain places and under certain circumstances. However, this had never been an issue to Adam and the woman until now.

**Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made for themselves loin coverings.** [Gen. 3:7]

We find here the first act of human good. Whether they covered themselves up or continued to go without clothes; that is a non-issue. The issue here was that they ate of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They do not think about Jesus Christ; they have forgotten about Him almost entirely. Their fellowship with God is broken and it will require God to restore this fellowship. God will have to seek them out. God will have to clothe them. He will need to cover their naked sinfulness. However, their sinfulness cannot be covered with a loin cloth made out of any material other than animal skins; and the animal must be an animal without spot and without blemish, an animal guilty of no wrongdoing; an animal which speaks of Jesus Christ who would go to the cross and die on behalf of this sin.

**And they heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the spiritual portion of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God in the forest of the garden.** [Gen. 3:8]

*Tree* is in the singular, but then it is in the singular back in Gen. 1:11. It behaves like our word *forest*—it can in the singular refer to trees in the collective sense. *Walking* and *hid* are both in the Hithpael stem, which is reflexive. The time of day in the NASB is translated as *the cool of the day* (or, *the wind breeze of the day*). The New Revised Standard Version calls this *at the time of the evening breeze*. Even the *Emphasized Bible* gives several similar renderings. *The Amplified Bible* doesn't amplify anything here. It is just *cool of the day*. I mention this to show how having several translations does not always give you a better idea of what is being presented. Certainly, you're thinking, *big deal, it's moderately chilly, there's a breeze in the air and maybe it's daytime or early evening; I've got the gist of it*. There are two nouns here, the second one being the common noun for *day* and found in Gen. 1:5,8,14,19, etc. The first word found here is *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*]. *Rûwach* has several meanings and this word has already occurred in Genesis 1:2 and it can be translated *wind, breath or breeze*, but it is usually translated *spirit*. This is the spiritual part of the day; this is when God came to talk with Adam and the woman in the garden; to have fellowship with them and to teach them.

God's Word, good food, right man/right woman and sex were all a part of perfect environment. What is indicated by this phrase is that there was a particular portion of the day devoted to fellowship with God. You cannot grow spiritually on Sunday worship service; nor can you grow spiritually by attending Sunday worship, Sunday school and Sunday evenings. We are continually inundated with human viewpoint; every person that we talk to, everything that we read and everything that we see on television is filled with human viewpoint. We are constantly bathed in the devil's world with human viewpoint. We are brainwashed and socially conditioned to think in certain ways; to believe certain things. Take any page of the newspaper, any ten minutes on television, any five-minute conversation with another person. You are receiving a way of thinking, a standard that you are to adhere to in the devil's world and it is wrong. Often there is just enough truth mixed in there to make it palatable. We only have one line of defense and that is God's Word. There is only one way to live in this devil's world and it begins with our thinking. If Adam and the woman required fellowship with God and spiritual truth on a daily basis to where there was a specific time period set aside for this; then how much more do we as Christians need this fellowship and feeding on the Word?

The man and the woman have been receiving Bible teaching from Jesus Christ in the garden for perhaps a century and they do not remember that God is omnipresent. They do not flee the garden because that is their home. This is not unlike hiding in a closet or the attic of one's home. They do not call out to God; they do not present themselves to God. They are in a fallen state. They do not know how to have fellowship with God nor do they

desire fellowship with God. God will have to make all of the first moves in order restore fellowship in this new world. Therefore, God will call to them.

**Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"** [Gen. 3:9]

God must speak first and He calls to the man, as the federal head of the earth. God is omniscient and He knows where they both are, but He must open the lines of communication. God must always reach out to us to provide us a grace means or a non-meritorious way to have fellowship or to restore fellowship with Him. God's question is a simple interrogative adverb with a second person, masculine singular suffix.

**And he said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."** [Gen. 3:10]

Even though *the sound of you* sounds stilted in the English, this is perhaps the best way to translate this phrase. *Your voice* sounds better, but Adam and the woman hide themselves when they here Jesus Christ walking in the garden. Note what occurs; Adam is fearful, an emotion that he has never had before; and he immediately justifies himself (which he will continue to do throughout this chapter). He possessed no shame or regret prior to his fall. Being naked before God and before his right woman was not an issue. He has always been naked and at this point in time, he is covered with a loin cloth, so he is not even naked now. And note, more importantly, he does not tell God that he is hiding because he ate of the fruit. God knows all of what has happened. His speaking to the man is to restore fellowship and to pass judgement on the man and the woman. However, the facts must be clearly stated for the man, and the woman and for all angelic creation. This is the purpose of the subsequent interrogation.

**And He said, "Who revealed to you [or caused you to know] that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?"** [Gen. 3:11]

The verb often translated *told* is the Hiphil perfect of the Hebrew word *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*]; and it means *to be conspicuous*. The Hiphil stem is the causative stem. Adam has been caused to know something, his nakedness *has been made conspicuous* to him or *declared and revealed* to him. As far as Adam is concerned, there is no one to tell him that he is naked other than Jesus Christ in the garden. We have no indication that Adam spoke to Satan in any form (although that would have been possible). Adam knows that he is naked because he has eaten from the tree and Adam knows that God knows this because he covered himself. God was never confused as to what happened; He knew what would happen in eternity past. He is not interrogating the man for the purpose of information; He is by-passing any lying and as many side-issues as possible. Adam will certainly pass the buck and blame everyone else in his vicinity, but God has at least headed him off at the pass when it comes to lying. *Eaten* and *commanded* are both in the perfect tense, meaning completed action; God left a standing command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and when Adam ate of the tree, it was a completed action, not to be repeated and with permanent results.

**And the man said, "The woman, whom You gave [to be] with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate."** [Gen. 3:12]

Adam has been immediately transformed from being a man to a child with several excuses. He blames the woman because she gave the fruit to him. He is not even going to give the woman's side of the story or cover up what she did; he blames the affair on her, the one he loves, and then blames God because God gave the woman to him. The word for gave is the same word in this verse and both times it is in the Qal perfect to match the two Qal perfects in the previous verse. According to Adam, he just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was just standing there, minding his own business when God drops a woman in his lap and then the woman drops the forbidden fruit into his hand. There is no inherent nobility in Adam; he does not immediately take responsibility for his actions.

At this point in time, Satan is quite pleased with himself. He did not attack the man directly. Had he deceived the man, the man's responsibility would have been lessened (but not eliminated). Furthermore, since the man was

the head of the earth, he could have commanded the woman to eat of the fruit and her volition would not have been involved. The woman is to obey the man and her disobedience to God would have been a non-issue. However, the woman still chose to eat of the tree of her own free will, although she was deceived by Satan (at that point in time, it was unknown that anyone would lie). Adam took of the fruit knowing exactly the responsibility of his action. Satan did to. Satan wanted them to be in as deep a water as he was in. I don't think that he had a clearly-formed plan other than to make certain that the man and the woman fell. Very likely one of his arguments was *So what if I fell; I can fix everything. Just give me a portion of the universe to hang in and I'll be fine.* Perhaps he said, *I'll never do it again.* However, this incident, along with the rest of human history reveals to us that Satan cannot be allowed to roam the universe freely. He will be in chains through the millennium (which is one of the reasons there is perfect environment), but when he is released, he will immediately lead a rebellion against perfect environment. Once a creature has fallen, he is a danger to the entire universe. Satan, in his arrogance and vindictiveness, will not allow any of God's creation to live unspoiled. Apparently, when innocence rebels against God, there is a fundamental change in its nature. This cannot be strictly a natural law, because God sets up the laws of the universe. However, this has to be a logical result which is fully compatible with God's essence. In fact, this fundamental change in a fallen creature's nature and God's judgement and punishment of same has to be. Any other result would be totally incompatible with God's character. The only modification possible to these results would be for a person, undeserving of punishment, to receive our punishment and the judgement for our sins; to endure the hell which we certainly deserve. That is the only basis for our pardon.

**Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." [Gen. 3:13]**

Jesus Christ continues His inquiry. This is not because He doesn't know what has occurred; God is omniscient and He knows all of the facts. This is for the court record and for the benefit of all angelic and human creation. Some angels were not there; and none of us were there. So, the facts must be stated for the record. The facts will be presented and then God will render His decision. He began with Adam because Adam was the ruler of the earth. God put him in charge (Gen. 1:28). He will allow the buck to be passed and then God will handle to judgement in the reverse order. Even though these creatures will blame someone else and think that they are off the hook; God's judgement will leave no one off the hook.

Satan has already been tried and convicted. He is in the midst of his appeal trial. God will stop with the woman and pronounce judgement. God has heard all of Satan's appeals already. Even the serpent will receive a judgment of sorts; which is more symbolic perhaps than a real judgement. Don't misunderstand me; God certainly did judge the serpent and there were real results; however, the purpose of the judgement was more symbolic than judicial.

**And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are more cursed than all of cattle [and more cursed] than every beast of the field. On your belly you shall walk and the dust you shall eat." [Gen. 3:14]**

### Satan's Appearance

1. There is no indication in the Bible that man has ever seen Satan.
2. All of our manifestations or representations of Satan are poor caricatures. The fellow in the red suit with the forked tail and pitch fork is not even close. If anything, Dracula is a semi-reasonable concept of Satan, yet still not accurate.
3. Satan's actual appearance is one of incredible beauty and attractiveness (Ezek. 28:12-13).
4. What we see in human history are the creatures which Satan has occupied. Satan occupies very few creatures because he is not omnipresent; therefore, when he indwells a creature, he is confined to that place, which Satan would find to be very stifling. However, we can reasonably guess that he indwelt this serpent (Rev. 12:9 20:2), Judas (Luke 22:3 John 13:27), and possibly some world leaders such as Hitler or Stalin.
5. Therefore, God judges the serpent, an animal, as a symbolic judgement of Satan; a judgement which we will observe throughout human history.

## Satan's Appearance

6. The test implies that the serpent either stood up on hind legs or had legs and feet that he walked upon like a lizard. There was an actual, physiological change in the serpent which has remained with this animal until this day. However, the judgement, although it is a real, physical judgement, its purpose was more of a symbolic judgement of Satan.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God continues His judgement of Satan:

**"And I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel."** [Gen. 3:15]

This is the first foreshadowing of the cross. Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman. In His incarnation, He will not have a biological father. He will be born of a virgin. This is more than just a sign. When we are born, we have a human father and this father passes onto us the old sin nature. The father determines our sex without any input whatsoever from the mother; similarly, because Adam sinned deliberately, making a clear, free-will choice, a choice which was not subject to fraud or misrepresentation; he therefore passes on the old sin nature, as do all of his sons. It is found in the father's sperm and this contaminates every egg. Because of this the old sin nature is found in each and every cell of the human body. There is one exception and that is the egg of the mother. Because the woman sinned under deception, she will carry within her body a perfect, undefiled egg, each and every month. Jesus Christ, because He was born of a virgin, was born without inheriting the old sin nature from the male. He was still tempted as we are, but He resisted all temptation. Our Savior must be without sin; otherwise He could not die for our sins because He would have to die for His own sin. Because of all this, Jesus Christ is called the seed of the woman. The serpent's seed refers to all unbelievers. The Bible does not teach the universal fatherhood of God. Those who are unbelievers take after their father, Satan (Matt. 13:38 John 8:31–44 Acts 13:10 1John 3:10).

Unfortunately, *The New English Bible* reads: *I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your brood and hers. They shall strike at your head and you shall strike at their heel.* This translation completely confuses those who read this version. There is no *they* in this verse. The verb, *shûwph* (שׁוּפַח) [pronounced *shoof*] means *to greatly injure or wound, to bruise, to grind, to snap at*. Almost every lexicon gives a different meaning for this verb. It is used twice in this verse and the meaning in both cases should be *to wound* or *to inflict serious injury to*. *The New English Bible* ignores the parsing of the verb. The first use of *shûwph* is the third person masculine singular with a second person masculine suffix, and it means *he shall wound you(r head)*. The second use of this word is in the second masculine singular with a third masculine singular suffix, meaning *(and) you shall wound Him (His heel)*. The point here is that there is no plural. In fact, every verb and noun is in the singular in this verse. The seed of the woman is not Christians, Jews or good people; it is Jesus Christ in His incarnation. The serpent is Satan. When a one crushes (or greatly injures) the head of a snake, he kills the snake. Jesus Christ will greatly wound Satan when Satan is locked away in prison for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2–3) and then after he is released, Jesus Christ will throw him into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10) However, when Satan wounds Christ on the heel, Jesus Christ will die, enduring on the cross an eternity of hells on our behalf. However, when He is finished, He will be raised from the dead to sit on the right hand of God for eternity (Matt. 19:28 Rev. 3:21).

**To the woman, He said, "I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception. In pain, you will bring forth sons; yet your craving shall be toward your man and he will rule over you."**  
[Gen. 3:16]

The KJV, the NRSV and the NASB and most other translations translate a portion of this as *"I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth"* (or words to that effect). Since there is an incredible amount of pain associated with childbirth, many translators have allowed this translation to stand. However, it is literally *your pain and your conception*. The next phrase tells us that there would be pain in childbirth. The literal translation is, *in pain, you*



will bring forth **sons** rather than *bring forth children*. In perfect environment, there was no pain or suffering and there was no childbirth. Both of these came as a result of the woman's eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Hebrew word translated *desire or craving* is *teshûwqâh* (תַּשׁוּוֹקָה) [pronounced *tesh-oo-KAW*]. This is a very rare word in the Old Testament, found only three times (also in Gen. 4:7 and SOS 7:10). It refers to an *intense desire*. Although there is a Hebrew word for *husband*, it is not found in this verse. This is the word for *man* as separate from woman. It does refer to Adam as her husband; but better as her *right-man*. A normal woman will crave her right man to the point of obsession. In a degenerate society where the males do not behave with honor and the females make a great many poor choices, this becomes distorted. Two simple explanations are the sin nature and scar tissue. The sin nature distorts the soul and the scar tissue on the soul reduces natural function.

At this point, I ought to explain what scar tissue is:

### Scar Tissue of the Soul

1. This is another term developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr. in order to explain a Biblical concept. There are a myriad of terms used in traditional theology which are not found in the Bible, including the accurate word *trinity*.
  - a. Vocabulary is necessary in this life. It is necessary in school—in every subject at school, at your job, and in theology. You are only able to think with a vocabulary. When I was a teacher, I taught my honors students how to build a mathematical system from scratch, and one of the most important aspects of this assignment was the development of a consistent and reasonably descriptive vocabulary. That is, you would not use the word *quad* to describe the *Trinity*. It makes more sense to use a word with which people are familiar; or a word that is made up of words with which people are familiar, and use the word to stand for a concept.
  - b. I simply mention these things because R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s vocabulary sometimes throws people for a loop; and some think that his teachings are cultic because of the vocabulary. A cult is not defined by having a specialized vocabulary, no more than the first person who came up with the term *Trinity* was a cultist.
2. Definition: scar tissue is what develops on the essence of the soul as a result of negative volition toward God and/or Bible Doctrine. For the unbeliever, scar tissue also can build up on their souls when they reject divine establishment principles and hold to utopian philosophies or to messiah-like political or religious figures. To understand how this works: let's say that your vacuum cleaner becomes filled with soot, hair, carpet fuzz or whatever. At some point, it loses its ability to create suction. There is no more a flow of air through a designated path. We "breathe" in information and we exhale this information in terms of what we do, think and say. If we breathe in Bible doctrine, divine viewpoint and divine establishment thinking, then we breathe out the correct application of these things. If we breathe in false doctrine, anti-establishment thinking and/or religion, we exhale this in our daily lives. If you can imagine your lungs covered over with scar tissue so that you cannot breathe properly, that is a physical parallel to scar tissue of the soul.
3. In case you did not know, there are Greek words from the Bible which describe this soul condition.
  - a. Verb: *pôroô* (πρωρώ) [pronounced *pon-ROH-oh*], which means, 1) *to cover with a thick skin, to harden by covering with a callus*; 2) *metaphorically*; 2a) *to make the heart dull*; 2b) *to grow hard, callous, become dull, lose the power of understanding*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #4456. Mark6:52 8:17 Jn.12:40 Rom.11:7 2Cor.3:14.
  - b. Feminine noun: *pôrôsis* (πύρωσις) [pronounced *POH-roh-sis*], which means, 1) *the covering with a callus*; 2) *obtrusiveness of mental discernment, dulled perception*; 3) *the mind of one has been blunted*; 3a) *of stubbornness, obduracy*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #4457. Mk.3:5 Rom.11:25 Eph.4:18
  - c. Feminine noun: *sklêrotês* (σκληρότης) [pronounced *sklay-ROHT-ace*], which means, 1) *hardness*; 2) *obstinacy, stubbornness*. Thayer definition only. Maranatha church adds: *petrified, hard like petrified wood*. Strong's #4643. Rom. 2:4–5
  - d. Feminine noun: *sklêrokardia* (σκληροκαρδία) [pronounced *sklay-rok-ar-DEE-ah*], which means,

## Scar Tissue of the Soul

- hardness of heart.* Thayer definition only. Strong's #4641. Matt. 19:8, Mark 10:5, Mark 16:14
- e. Adjective sklêotrachêlos (σκληροτραχηλος) [pronounced *sklay-rot-RAKH-ah-los*], which means, 1) *stiffnecked*; 2) *stubborn, headstrong, obstinate.* Thayer definition only. Strong's #4644. Acts 7:51
- f. Verb sklêrunô (σκληρύνω) [pronounced *sklay-ROO-no*], which means, 1) *to make hard, harden*; 2) *metaphorically*; 2a) *to render obstinate, stubborn*; 2b) *to be hardened*; 2c) *to become obstinate or stubborn.* Thayer definition only. Maranatha church adds *to petrify.* Strong's #4645.
4. Eph.4:17-19 gives us the mechanics of scar tissue: **This, therefore, I am saying and solemnly declaring in the Lord, that no longer are you to be ordering your behavior as the Gentiles order their behavior in the futility of their mind, being those who have their understanding darkened, who have been alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, through the hardening of their hearts, who, being of such a nature as to have become callous, abandoned themselves to wantonness, resulting in a performing of every uncleanness in the sphere of greediness. (Weust) Or the ESV: Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.**
  5. R. B. Thieme Jr. takes this passage apart: **This, therefore, I {Paul} explain/communicate and make 'an emphatic honest demand'/'testify under oath' by means of the Lord, for the purpose that you all no longer continue walking just as also the Gentiles {acting as reversionistic unbelievers} who keep walking, by means of the 'mataiotes'/'vacuum/nothingness/emptiness of their mind'/'left lobe of the soul'. {Note: Mataiotes means emptiness or devoid-ness. It therefore refers to a lack of doctrine in the soul resulting in a vacuum of the soul. The empty space is therefore filled with human viewpoint and/or 'doctrines of demons'. The next stage in reversionism is scar tissue of the soul; which leads to the sin unto death if they continue in reversionism.} **Having become darkened in their {way of} thinking . . . {scar tissue of the soul - blackout of the soul - no objective type thinking} {1} having been estranged {warning stage}/ {2} alienated {intensified stage}/ {3} excluded {final stage - sin unto death} {apalotrioo} from the {concept of} life of their God . . . because of the ignorance which keeps on being in them {blackout - negative to doctrine} . . . because of the hardness of their 'right lobe'/heart. {Note: Apalotrioo has three meaning - estranged, alienated, and excluded. They are all applicable here depending on which stage of black out of the soul the believer is in.} {Reversionism Leads to a Frantic Search for Happiness} **Who/'which category' {of reversionists} while having become callused {by scar tissue of the soul} . . . have 'betrayed themselves'/'given themselves over' to promiscuous debauchery {means illicit sexual activity, adultery, lasciviousness, licentiousness, being unrestrained}, resulting in the practice of every kind of immorality . . . in the sphere of insatiable lusts {desires/greediness in three categories - sexual, arrogance, power}.******
  6. The idea is, if you reject Bible doctrine, then your mind becomes a vacuum which sucks in human viewpoint and cosmic thinking, which covers your soul in scar tissue, which thinking eventually blinds you [this is known as *blackout of the soul*]. The great unhappiness which results can lead you on a frantic search for happiness, wherein you give in to your lusts, becoming a slave to your lusts.
  7. Scar tissue can form on the heart (thinking) of the believer, which is illustrated by the Exodus generation. They had one of the greatest leaders of all time—Moses—leading while being guided by God. They saw tremendous miracles, and yet, their faith in Y<sup>ehowah</sup> yielded nearly no positive spiritual results. Although they walked out of Egypt, God eventually had to take the first generation of believers (Gen X) out under the sin unto death before they could move into the land of promise.
  8. The solution to scar tissue is given in the verses which follow its description in Eph. 4: **But that is not the way you learned Christ!-- assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for**

## Scar Tissue of the Soul

building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you (Eph. 4:20–32, ESV).

9. Exegeting this passage was one of the great breakthroughs for R. B. Thieme, Jr.: **But {in contrast} you {Royal Family} have absolutely not {to be reversionist and negative to the word} been taught {academic learning under strong discipline} in this manner . . . the Christ.** {Note: All doctrine revolves around the person of Jesus Christ. In fact bible doctrine is the mind of Christ. Reversionism is the function of your own soul and we are not taught in the bible to go backwards. We are told to advance and hold the high ground as long as we live.} **If, in as much as, you had begun to hear Him {Christ - by listening to doctrinal teaching} - and you have - and have been taught by Him, since the doctrine/truth is and keeps on being . . . in the Jesus.** {Importance of Rebound in Reversion Recovery} **{That} with reference to your former 'manner of life'/lifestyle, you 'rid yourselves'/lay aside' {rebound technique} the 'old man' {Old Sin Nature (OSN)} . . . which {OLD SIN NATURE} is becoming depraved/corrupted/degenerate according to the lusts from the source of deceit** {reversionism is the source of the lust}. {Note: The 'old man' refers to a person out of fellowship and 'living by the flesh'. All unbelievers do this, and so do believers who revert to their old thinking and have gone into reversionism.} {Resumption of GAP in Reversion Recovery} **And for the purpose that you be restored again and again by means of the {Holy} Spirit by the means and source of your mind/'left lobe'.** {Follow-through to SuperGrace - Logical Progression of Three Infinitives in Verses 22-24} **24~~And for the purpose that you clothe yourself {on the inside} with the 'new in species man' {member of the Royal Family - having an Edification Complex of the Soul - a new species of man}, which according to the standard of God {the perfect standard} has been created in the sphere of {absolute} righteousness and in the sphere of 'devotion to doctrine'/'true holiness'.** {Verses 25-32: Seven Results} {Verse 25: Recovering the Divine Viewpoint} **Therefore having stripped off 'the lie' {cosmic involvement} {from Zechariah 8:16} each one of you keep communicating the truth/doctrine {doctrine as the absolute truth} with the 'near to him' {someone close to you in your soul} because we are 'members one of another' {part of the body of Christ}.** {Note: This verse is discussing the habitual act of lying. Lying is a sin and sinning takes you into the Cosmic System and out of fellowship. Also, the Plan of Satan - the Cosmic System - is also referred to as 'living in the lie'. Both concepts are in view here.} {Verse 26: Objective Indignation} **'Be angry with righteous indignation and yet do not sin in your anger/' tremble with anger and do not sin' {a quote from Psalms 4:4} . . . do not permit the sun to go down on your intensified/sinful anger.** {Note: There is a time for justifiable anger when your thinking clearly lines up with 'the Truth' (from the previous verse). The second part of the verse is a mental attitude sin and we are instructed to keep short accounts - rebound.} {Verse 27: Victory in the angelic conflict} **And, do not be giving opportunity/space/room {running room} to the devil.** {Verse 28: Production of Divine Good in the Business World} **The one stealing {reversionist} . . . from now on . . . stop stealing; but rather work hard {to the point of exhaustion}, earning a living {the good} with his very own hands in order that he might have and hold {money} to share with the one having a need.** {Note: When individuals share their excess blessings with others, that is charity and appropriate. When the Government takes your money and gives it to those who refuse to work is welfare. It helps neither the party having the money taken from them or the recipient who does not learn the value of working hard . . . self-esteem, etc. Charity is for the helpless poor, welfare is for the poor helpless.} **Do not permit any rotten communications/sermons {unsound doctrine} to go out from your mouth, but, in contrast, whatever {sound and true doctrine} keeps on being good of intrinsic value for the purpose of edification {edification complex of the soul}, in order that it {doctrine} may give grace {understanding of grace resulting in SuperGrace} to the ones customarily/consistently hearing.** {Verses 30-32: Discontinuance of the Practice of Grieving the Holy Spirit} **And, stop grieving the Spirit . . . the Holy One . . . the God {co-equal with the other members of the Godhead}, by Whom you have been sealed {eternal security} for the day of redemption {rapture/ultimate sanctification}.** {Discontinue Bitterness} **All categories of bitterness {types follows}: both wrath {emotional type anger - violent outburst}, and anger {mental attitude anger - tantrums, sulking}; both vociferation {shouting in anger, verbal brawling, offensive loudness} and slander {murder with your mouth, character assassination} . . . be removed from you all . . . together with all 'other forms of wickedness'/malice/'revenge motivation'.** {Note: Bitterness involves

## Scar Tissue of the Soul

antagonism, animosity, hardness and cruelty toward others. Hence, the totality of resentment toward others. Bitterness is related to the mental attitude sinning of reversionism in this passage. It is also closely related to 'Chain sinning'. It is similar to the chain smoker who lights one cigarette on another - 'clusters of sin' - one on another on another.} {Verse 32: Nobility of the Soul under the Function of Grace} **But** {in contrast to verse 31} **become 'gracious in the soul/kind toward one another** {impersonal love}, compassionate {eusplagchnos - virtue from thinking doctrine}, **graciously forgiving each other, even as the God in/"by means of the agency of' Christ has graciously forgiven all of you.**

10. Living with scar tissue is, unfortunately, the lifestyle of many believers. The most fundamental doctrine of the Christian life—the periodic naming of your sins to God—is something which is done rarely, if at all; resulting in the lift of a believer who is nearly always out of fellowship. It is possible to mask this scar tissue with self-righteousness and overtly moral behavior. Therefore, it is possible for people to be under the blackout of the soul, and yet seem to be okay. I have no idea if former Vice President Al Gore is a believer or not, but if he was, he would be a believer suffering from blackout of the soul due to the rejection of Bible doctrine and the vacuum which has sucked in human viewpoint into his soul.

Sources and references:

[http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=1501](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1501)

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/scar-tissue.html>

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d&sf=rea&did=3>

<http://www.gracedoctrine.org/word/012311.htm>

<http://makarios-online.org/notes/pdf/scar%20tissue%208-10.pdf>

[http://www.gbible.org/\\_files/pdf/blackout.pdf](http://www.gbible.org/_files/pdf/blackout.pdf)

[http://syndein.com/Ephesians\\_4a.html](http://syndein.com/Ephesians_4a.html)

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The result scar tissue in women can be lesbianism, women's liberation and other indicators of confusion. These things are as much the fault of the man as they are of the woman. Nevertheless, the principle stands. And even in a degenerate society, the majority of the women will still crave their right man. Sometimes, all they have is an image, distorted by their old sin nature; but the woman still craves and chases that image.

Even though the woman was deceived, she still is responsible for her decisions. This is an important principle in marriage, because when many women are married, they have been deceived by the man that they marry. They are still responsible for this decision. Because of the way that God designed the soul of the woman, she has a safety device to keep her from being deceived. That is the man as her ruler. When a woman begins to think about marriage, the first thing that she should contemplate is *can I subjugate my will to this man for the rest of my life? Do I have enough respect and trust in this man to allow him to rule over me as though he is my God, my Lord and master?* If she has any reservations in this regard, then she should not get married. The woman is under the rulership of the man in marriage because (1) the first woman allowed Satan to deceive her in the garden and she choose directly in opposition to God's stated will and, (2) because Adam was created first and the woman was created for him. There is no inferiority or superiority implied here. Nor is this to be a dominance of a cruel and unjust or tyrannical nature. Nor is every man the ruler of every woman. It is the right man is the ruler over his right woman and that only with her consent. I have no personal ax to grind in this respect nor is it my intense desire to have the power to rule over another person. It is what the Bible says: *and he shall rule over you.* It is a matter of God's plan. This does not mean that a woman has no authority. I have worked under a half a dozen women and, like men, some exercised their authority properly and intelligently and some did not. Most I had a great personal respect for and never felt inferior or out of God's plan because they had authority over me.

What we have here is a careful balance designed by God to protect the woman and to protect the woman's soul. She has a craving toward her right man and he is to rule over her. If she can balance that craving with a conscious choice to subjugate her will to this man, then she has likely chosen the correct person to marry. If she only feels an intense desire, but cannot submit to his authority, then she needs to reevaluate her choice. Then

she is operating under libido, a desire for security and under the image but not the reality of her right man. Even under tremendous desire, the right man will honor the right woman and treat her with respect. The woman must recognize this and be able to determine when it is genuine and when it is an act. Again, this goes back to the delicate balance of craving and authority.

**Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to [and obeyed] the voice of your woman and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; the ground is cursed because of you; in difficult toil [and pain] you will eat of it all the days of your life." [Gen. 3:17]**

As in the previous verse, there is no word for *wife* here, but these are the words for man and woman as are found in Gen. 2:23. In our degenerate times, some have rebelled against the concept of ownership in marriage, but this verse as well as v. 16 speaks of ***your man*** and ***your woman***. There is a possessiveness which works both ways for a man and a woman.

Adam sinned deliberately under his own free will. God did not create Adam to sin; He created Adam perfect and placed him into perfect environment. But God did give him the ability to chose for or against His mandates. God has the ability to create beings with free will. Just as Adam had free will in the garden, we have free will today. There has developed a lot of theological controversy over the centuries about God's sovereignty and man's free will. The Armenians believe that man's free will is so powerful that it can undo perfect salvation; that is, by the proper number of wrong choices, man can undermine the work of Christ on the cross in his behalf and lose his salvation. The Calvinists (although, not necessarily Calvin, from what I understand) believe that God's sovereignty is too powerful for man's free will to exist and that every move that we make is under God's direction, in accordance with His perfect plan. If we choose to believe in Jesus Christ and then to lead a reasonable Christian life, it is because God granted us the free will choice to do so; and those who do not are just operating under their own natural volition, for which they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. It is for our choices that we are responsible. God has the ability to create man with an actual free will, whether in a fallen or a perfect state. Because we have free will, we are completely responsible for our free will.

*Listened* is the Qal perfect of *shâma'* (שָׁמַע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*] and it can be the simple word for *listen*, but in this context, it means *to listen and to obey*. The old English has a terrific word for this: *hearken*. Unfortunately, *hearken* is old English. God makes it very clear as to the act of disobedience here and in v. 11. The Hebrew word for *man* is 'âdâm and the Hebrew word for *land* is 'âdâmâh. Adam was born knowing the words for *man* and *land*. *Man* is naturally in the masculine singular and *land* is in the feminine singular. The poetical nature of his statement in Gen. 2:23 is even more striking because man was called 'âdâm because he was taken out of 'âdâmâh (*the earth or the ground*) and Adam called the woman *ishah* because she was taken out of ish (man). Man was taken out of the ground (singular feminine) and the woman was taken out of man (singular masculine). Adam added a feminine ending to Ish to set up a grammatical parallel and a parallelism of origin.

When man was created, tending the garden was a pleasure and exercise. He enjoyed doing it. Although he could eat from the trees and find nourishment and food in the way of fruit, God gave him the opportunity to do some gardening. This form of relaxation and exercise will become necessary and a burden. The word 'itstsâbôwn (עָבַד) [pronounced *gih-tsaw-BOHN*] is found here, in relationship to farming, in Gen. 5:29, where it is used in the same sense, and in Gen. 3:16 as the first word for *pain*. It means *pain, painful, difficult and toil*. The very ground from which Adam was taken; the ground that he has enjoyed for perhaps a century as a gardener, gardening for leisure and for exercise, will turn on him. Whereas it wa a joy and it was easy, this will all change. The earth had become cursed. This is the point at which God put into motion the first or the second law of thermodynamics: that all matter proceeds from order to disorder. What God has warned Adam and the woman that "in a state of death you will die." This pronouncement of judgement is an explanation in detail as to what that statement meant. Adam's state of death is primarily spiritual. He will have a separation from God as we have, and a bondage to the earth which is also in a state of decay. In this state of death, he will degenerate physically and eventually die.

**"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you will eat food until you return to the ground, because from it you were taken—for you are dust; and to dust you will return."** [Gen. 3:18–19]

Gardening for Adam will change from a pleasure to a toilsome necessity. *To bring forth* is in the Hiphil imperfect, meaning that God will cause the ground to continually bring forth thorns and thistles. Since our word *you* can be plural or singular, I should point out that all of the Hebrew suffixes are second masculine singular in this verse. God is speaking directly to Adam and placing these judgements upon him. God spends the longest time with Adam because he laid down the law to Adam and the man sinned knowingly. These same curses will apply to the entire human race.

Under perfect environment, there were no thorns or thistles; there was no pain; there was no childbirth; there was no spiritual separation from God; there was no physical death. It is even possible that Adam and the woman did not even know what some of these things were. They may have had only a vague concept as to what thorns and thistles were, or pain. In the Hebrew, *plants* is actually in the singular. To get a feel for the singular use, you may substitute in *herbage* or *production*.

*By the sweat of your face* is different in the Hebrew than I would have expected. *Sweat* is a feminine singular noun (*sweat* can also be masculine) with an attached preposition. *Your* is the second masculine singular suffix (referring to Adam) of *face*, which is masculine dual or plural. I do not know of any translation which takes all of this into account. Furthermore, *face* is more often rendered *nostrils* (Gen. 2:7), *nose* and even *anger* (as in, nostrils flaring as a sign of anger). I would have expected *the sweat of your brow* instead. The dual is easily explained if one translates this *by the sweat of your nostrils*. Why the feminine for sweat rather than the masculine eludes me except as a reference to the woman who gave Adam the fruit. In any case, whereas gardening was a pleasure for Adam, it will become a chore. In order to eat, he must work and work will often be difficult. Many translations read *you will eat bread*. They are not invalid because the Hebrew word can mean *food* or *bread*. It is specifically used for *bread* in the Levitical offerings. We do not know if Adam and the woman had learned how to make bread from wheat. To examine wheat and then to see the finished product as bread, one can't help but wonder *what were they thinking?* How did anyone come up with this? Personally, I could have grown wheat for a thousand years and not figured out how to make bread from it. I am even wondering at this point whether God taught Adam and the woman how to make bread. There was no leaven and there were no ovens so this would not have tasted like Mrs. Baird's bread. However, considering the difference of environment, it is likely that their bread tasted incredible. It gives me a thought about leaven also. I have often wondered why leavening was considered to be a symbol of evil, and therefore not allowed during Passover. However, leaven is a sign of the new world, the world after the fall; the world after the flood. It is associated with Noah's and, later, Lot's drunkenness.

*Dust* is dry earth and God took from this dry earth, added water, created a soul and spirit, and thereby created man. Man will now decay and eventually end up back as the elements of the earth. Dust here is a symbol of judgement, of degradation, as we saw in Gen. 3:14 (see also Gen. 18:27, Job 16:15 and Isa. 47:1).

**Now the man called the woman Eve, because she was the mother of all living.** [Gen. 3:20]

You can tell that Adam has gone through a transformation. His original designation for the woman was the beautiful word *ishshah*. This word is Chavvâh (חַוְוָה) [pronounced *khahv-VAW*] which is not nearly as beautiful or poetic. Still, even in their fallen state, Adam and the woman had similar feelings about births as do we, with the added hope that this would be the one to deliver them from their fallen states.

The verb for the word *to live* is châyâh (חַיָּה) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*]. In their excitement of the anticipation of a child (it is likely that they had observed this in the animal kingdom), Adam names the woman *Chavah* (Eve). While it does not match the poetical beauty and irony of her first name, it is still a reasonable name. From whence do we derive the name *Eve*? The Greek word for Chavvah is Εύα, which is pronounced *Hway'-aw* making it a transliteration there is no *v* or *w* in the Greek as there is in the Hebrew). However, it looks like *Eve*, so perhaps

it was a semi-arbitrary choice of an early translator which has been followed through the ages (here, I am only guessing).

More importantly, is this story allegorical? It is a made up story to explain some truth? There are enough real life experiences recorded in *Genesis* to make one more which is merely a story unnecessary. Furthermore, Jesus alluded to the historicity of Adam and Eve in Mark 10:6–8b, when He said, "**But from the very beginning of creation, God made them male and female; for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and the two shall become one flesh.**" Whereas our Lord took time to explain His own parables and expound on truths found in the Old Testament (see Matt. 5:17–30), nowhere does He ever allude to the first few chapters of *Genesis* as some sort of an allegory or story. Paul, under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, wrote, **But I am concerned that, just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, that your minds might be led astray from the integrity and purity of Christ** (2Cor. 11:3). Also, under the ministry of the Spirit, Adam gives Timothy two reasons why the man is in authority over the woman: **But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exert authority over a man, but to remain quiet, for [you see], it was Adam who was first created, then Eve. And [it was] not Adam who was deceived but the woman, being quite deceived, who fell into transgression.** (1Tim. 12–14). The authority of the man is an issue which will survive throughout the ages along with the controversy over this authority. Paul settles the question here, quoting the historicity of creation and the fall as the reasons for this authority. This also precludes women from teaching in the church in positions of authority over men (male children are not men).

The designation of Eve as *the mother of all living* indicates that the creation of mankind is over and that all of humanity will proceed from Eve. Her is another area where people may have problems. This means that Jews, Blacks, Indians, Hispanics, Orientals and Caucasians (including Pollacks) have as their common ancestors Adam and Eve. This should not trouble the earnest Bible student, nor should it be a cause for dispute from the unbeliever. All the breeds of dogs have proceeded from a common ancestor—Christians and non-Christians will attest to that historical fact, and yet these dogs are different in coloration, size, figure, etc. They are all dogs and no one has bred a mouse or a cat from an original set of canine parents. The key is the isolation of certain genes in breeding. It is likely that man chose similar looking women with whom to raise a family and it is very likely at the confusion of the languages at the tower of Babel that God did not arbitrarily assign everyone a language, but kept that language within certain family groups. Instead of having everyone counting off and then assigning all *one's* this language, all *two's* that language, etc.; God likely isolated certain genetic types and families and gave these similar groupings the same language.

**And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his woman, and clothed them.**

[Gen. 3:21]

Salvation has been the same from the first ones who sinned to the last. Adam and Eve's sins were paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross. They were given a temporary covering to shield them from God's judgement. God saw the skins of the sacrificial animals (the same word is used for the hides of sacrificial animals in Ex. 29:14 and Lev. 4:11) and passed over them for judgement. The skins were a covering, not for their nakedness, but for their sin. God looked to them and saw Jesus Christ on the cross, dying for their sins. Since this had not occurred historically, these skins were a temporary covering. An animal had to die; the first animal that Adam and Eve ever saw die, in order to make these skins. God could have made clothing out of cotton but this does not illustrate to them the salvation; the efficacy of the innocent dying on behalf of the guilty. Notice also that God is doing all of the work. He makes the garments for them and he clothes them. This sacrifice is seen again in Gen. 4:1–7 where Cain's sin is that he is presenting God with offerings from his own production rather than the sacrifice of an innocent animal. Cain, in fact, was the first animal rights activist, but more of that in the next chapter.

There is something about these four verses, vv. 20–23, which strikes me as inharmonious or stilted. I cannot put my finger on it. It seems as though the chronological order is lost. That, or that they are occurring simultaneously. God has passed judgement on the man and the woman and Adam goes back to his naming thing which he did the first day of his life. The Lord God, meanwhile, even as Adam is doing this, brings to them an animal and kills it before them and prepares the hide. Then, God the Father determines that they must be driven out of the garden. Right now, Jesus Christ is with them in the garden, but He cannot leave until he has removed them from the garden. Man has continually attempted to bypass the cross. How many billions of people refuse to take God's

free gift of salvation, yet think that they should be allowed in God's presence after their death? They want to bypass the cross and still gain eternal life. So many people have tried to perpetuate their lives, no matter how miserable, by any means possible.

**Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us<sup>21</sup>, knowing good from evil, and now, so that he does not stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat and live forever"—therefore, the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to serve the ground from which he was taken. [Gen. 3:22–23]**

This quotation is exactly as it seems; it is fragmented, as if said in haste. God had to take immediate action. Adam could not be allowed to remain in the garden. *Has become* is the exact same word as found in Gen. 1:2, except that it is in the masculine gender here rather than the feminine. The Qal perfect means that this is an action which is complete. There is no process of action here; it has occurred once and for all. The tree of life would have perpetuated life, possibly forever, as this indicates. The man and the woman must shed their fallen natures and this cannot occur apart from physical death, otherwise they will perpetuate their spiritual death. They still have Jesus Christ, but the relationship has changed. The words *take*, *eat* and *live* are all in the Qal perfect. This means that these actions would be complete and irrevocable.

Adam was created with the express purpose to rule over the earth from which he was taken (Gen. 1:26) but now he will *serve* the earth. *Serve* is the same word as is found in Gen. 2:15, but it is no longer a joy but a necessity to his life; therefore *serve* is the proper rendering, in context.

**So He drove the man out; and at the eat of the garden of Eden, He stationed the Cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life. [Gen. 3:24]**

Both the words *sent* in v. 23 and *drove* in v. 24 are in the Piel imperfect or intensive stem, imperfect action; that is, only a portion of the action is viewed or the action has not been completed. Although God keeps us from this tree of life, He provides us with another tree of life in the New Testament: Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins. The cross of Jesus Christ becomes our *tree of life*. The reason Adam was prevented from eating from the tree of life in the garden was that tree would perpetuate his life in a fallen state. The cross of Christ provides for us eternal life in a state of restored perfection.

At this point, we ought to examine the **Doctrine of the Cherubim of God.**

### The Cherubim of God

1. Cherubim guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden after the expulsion of Adam and Eve: **When He drove out the man, He placed Cherubim out from the front to the Garden of Eden along with [lit., and] a fiery sword, turning [and transforming], in order to guard the path to the Tree of Lives [or, immortality] (Gen. 3:24).**
2. There were two golden cherubim upon the Ark Of The Covenant, who represent the Angelic Conflict. **"And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover." (Exodus 25:18-20).**
3. God dwelt between the two cherubim (Ex. 25:22 2Sam. 6:2). This essentially indicates that God is in the midst of angels in general (2Kings 19:15).
4. The idea that God would meet with man in between the two cherubim describes the concept of salvation; because between them was the mercy seat which sat upon the Ark of God (which represented Jesus Christ). Our salvation is the result of a gracious act of Jesus Christ, dying for our sins, so that we might

<sup>21</sup> There seems to be some confusion at this point whether this is a first person common plural or a third person masculine singular. Further, Owens gives the alternate rendering *them* instead of *us*, which could be reasonable except that it is not singular. Therefore, the likely rendering would be *us*.



## The Cherubim of God

meet God on the mercy seat of the Ark of God. This is central to the Angelic Conflict.

5. Ezekiel had a curious encounter with cherubim, and described their appearance: **Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings, were completely full of eyes, as were their four wheels. I heard the wheels being called "the whirling wheels."** Each of the cherubim had four faces: One face was that of a cherub, the second the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. (Ezekiel 10:12-14). Ezekiel probably speaks more on Cherubim (Cherubs) than anyone else in the Bible. Ezek. 1 10
6. The appearance of the Cherubim in The Tabernacle In The Wilderness is also described in the New Testament: **A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover** (Hebrews 9:2-5).

References:

<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/cherubim.htm>

<http://www.bible-topics.com/Cherubim.html>

I do not know anything about these websites, so I cannot confirm their accuracy throughout.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

One of the things which I have noticed is that there are details in the Bible of things which we have never seen and would have no reason to even know about if it were not in the Bible. For instance: the earth was originally watered by a mist arising from the ground and not by rain (Gen. 2:6). If man had written the Bible from man's viewpoint (particularly so-called primitive man), he would not have thought to include something which was not at all like our present state. This verse also includes information that we would not have known about. God set up angels to guard the Garden of Eden and to keep man from the tree of life. The angels use a flaming sword which turns in every direction to bar us from the garden. Exactly what this was; that is, whether Adam and Eve were prevented from seeing the entrance to the garden or seeing the garden at all because of this sword turning every way or whether this was similar to a road block to keep them out, we do not know. However, the Garden of Eden is not mentioned again in the Bible in the pre-deluvian civilization. We do not have man trying to steal into the garden to eat from the tree of life.

## Internal Links

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

## Genesis 4

**Genesis 4** has been completely reworked and may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WP-compressed](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

### Genesis 4:1–24

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

v. 4      [How to Distinguish Between Christianity and Christian Cults](#)

**Introduction:** Genesis chapter 4 tells us the familiar story of Cain and Abel. We learn some things about sin that we did not realize in this chapter and about God's judgement of sin. We also see the first animal rights activist and the first religion of man.

**Now the man had sexual relations with his woman, Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a man, the Lord<sup>22</sup>."** [Gen. 4:1]

The first verb in the Qal perfect in v. 1 is *yâda'* (יָדַע) [pronounced *yaw-DAHG*], and it, like many of the words found in Genesis, is very common Hebrew. It means *to know, to be known, to observe, to take note of*, etc. It also means, in the proper context, *to know in the sense of having sexual relations with*. The Qal perfect means a completed action which yields results. I remember a letter in the *Straight Dope* of someone asking Cecil Adams at what point in time did man realize that copulation would result in having a child. Here is the answer to that question. The first parents understood that there was a relationship between sex and having children.

The name *Cain* was likely a play on words, for which Adam and Eve were both known. *Cain* is *Qayin* (קַיִן) [pronounced *KAH-yin*] and she says that *I have gotten*; *qânâh* (קָנָה) [pronounced *kaw-NAWH*] and means *to purchase, to redeem, to buy, to get, to acquire*. In Gen. 1:19, when God is called a *possessor* of heaven and earth (the Qal participle of *qânâh*), He possesses these because He bought them. This adds new meaning to the verse "*I have gotten a man [from] the Lord.*" (Gen. 4:1b), which is totally incorrect. It should read: "*I have purchased a man—the Lord.*" There was blood, there was pain—she endured the first labor and no one knew exactly what was occurring. She felt as though she had brought forth the Redeemer in all her pain and blood. Although the woman was wrong in what had occurred, she did understand that there was a purchasing which took place with blood and pain which was related to the Redeemer, Who would come through her. Strong's #7069 BDB #888.

She very possibly took his name from its noun cognate, *acquisition*, which is the word *qin<sup>e</sup>yân* (קִינָיָן) [pronounced *kin<sup>e</sup>-YAWN*]. There is disagreement concerning the preposition here. The preposition is generally conceded to be *with the help of* (like all prepositions, it has several meanings). However, it appears as though the way I have translated it above is the most accurate (see *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 36 footnote). It is very likely that Eve expected her firstborn to be her savior, YHWH. How much she knew about her Savior to come, we do not know, but she does know that it will be her seed. This indicates that she knows it will be Jesus Christ in the garden who will be born of her and that He will be her Savior. She just happens to be wrong about who this son is and when Jesus Christ will come in the flesh.

Because many of the most ancient proper names have reasonable, corresponding meanings in the Hebrew language, it has been asserted that Hebrew may have been the original language. This is at best, speculation,

---

<sup>22</sup> or, *with the help of* the Lord

and not necessarily important unless the Word of God chooses to speak to this issue. Proper nouns are sometimes carried from one language to another and adjusted to reflect their original meanings. It is also possible that the words from which they are derived also are transferred from language to language. However, that is enough speculation; if it was important that we knew the original language of man, God would have revealed it to us.

**And again she gave birth to his brother, Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.** [Gen. 4:2]

*Again* is not an adverb but a verb. It is the Hiphil imperfect of *yâçaph* (יָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*] and it means *to add to, to increase by, to have more*. The Hiphil is the causative stem and this verb carries with it the singular feminine suffix. Eve was cause to increase or to add to her number of sons by one: Abel. The meaning of Abel's name is less certain, with possible suggestions of *breath, fragility, vapor* or *son*. It is quite likely that there was meaning to his name, but that has been lost over the millenniums which have passed.

We do not know how much guidance that Adam and Eve got from Jesus Christ when it came to raising their sons (and daughters, who are not mentioned). We do not have a set pattern of morality, examples of things which are wrong to help guide a child to do that which is right. The size of the society was small, but it appears to have grown rapidly. The things that Cain or Abel might think of doing may not even occur to Adam and Eve. Christian parents think that their job of raising their children is difficult because of all the outer influences. God has provided us with clear guidelines when it comes to raising children and clear guidelines for what is right and wrong. We need only start with a child while he or she is young and correctly love and discipline them. And they must both go together; if there is no discipline, then there is no love; just like if there is no knowledge of Who and What God is, then there is no love, no matter how emotional the person gets.

It has been suggested by those who object to the historicity of Genesis that this is an allegory, revealing the enmity which exists between the farmer and the shepherd. This is pure conjecture as most allegories have in mind to teach some principle. There is nothing being taught here. The villain, clearly Cain, is a farmer; but then so was his father, Adam. So it is not implied or stated that farming is wrong in any way or inferior to shepherding. Cain is called upon to account for his offering, which was not efficacious, and for his actions in killing Abel. His vocation is never an issue.

**So it came to pass in the course of time that Cain brought an gift<sup>23</sup> to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Also, Abel, as well, on his part, brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his gift but for Cain and for his gift, He had no regard [lit., He did not look at it]. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.** [Gen. 4:3–5]

Most people do not even have a clue as to what has occurred here. When I read this story as an unbeliever, it seemed particularly arbitrary. Cain has worked hard in his garden and he brings to God the best of his production as a sacrifice. It is possible that Cain does not want to harm an animal and would rather offer God a kinder and gentler offering. To me, in my unbelieving youth, it seemed as though what Cain was offering was reasonable and, if anything, commendable. The problem is that our human good and our human works mean nothing whatsoever to God. In fact, *all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight* (Isa. 64:6). This confuses the unbeliever and sometimes puts him off when it comes to Christianity. How can someone spend most of their life trying to do good for others, living sacrificially, thinking nice thoughts as often as possible; and then be condemned to eternity in hell? What kind of an arbitrary God is that and what kind of a religion would teach that? At this point in time, we have had one pronouncement of morality of which we are cognizant: do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the second; and the first recorded one for a fallen world. Fruits and vegetables, the works of man's hands, are not offerings that God will regard as efficacious. There must be a blood sacrifice. An innocent life must be given in order for God to accept the sacrifice. From the very beginning, God would have to send His Son, Jesus Christ to the cross to pay for our sins with His blood sacrifice, the innocent on

---

<sup>23</sup> or, present, tribute or offering

behalf of the guilty. Every animal sacrifice was a shadow and spoke of this sacrifice which was real and still to come.

The difference between Cain and Abel and their sacrifices is the difference between true Christianity and any other religion, sect or cult:

<b>How to Distinguish Between Christianity and Christian Cults</b>	
<b>True Christianity</b>	<b>Religion, "Christian" cults, Catholicism, etc.</b>
God seeks us (Gen. 3:9 4:6)	We seek God* (Acts 17:27)
God provides the means of salvation (Gen. 3:15,21 2Cor. 5:21)	We provide the means for our salvation
We come to God on the basis of a blood sacrifice of that which is innocent (Gen. 3:21 4:3–5 1Peter 3:18)	We come to God on the basis of our good life, our works, our human goodness (Luke 19:18–25 Rom. 4:2)
God reaches down to us (John 1:1,14 3:27)	We reach up to God (Gen. 3:3–5)
Our salvation and relationship with God is based upon what God has done for us in the form of Jesus Christ on the cross (Gal. 2:16,21 3:13 Tit. 3:5)	Our salvation and relationship to God is based upon our being a good person, following the law or the ten commandments, etc. (Rom. 3:20–21)
Salvation is free (Rom. 4:5 Eph. 2:8)	We earn our salvation (Rom. 9:31)
Salvation is unmerited (1Cor. 4:7 Eph. 2:9)	If we are bad, we are not saved (Luke 23:39–43)
Righteousness is imputed (Rom. 4:22 9:30)	Righteousness is earned (Acts 17:25)
Salvation is permanent (Psalm 37:24 John 10:27–30 Rom. 8:1 11:1,2,29)	It is possible to lose our salvation if we commit enough sins or rebel against God (1Cor. 5:17)
Our righteousness is Christ's righteousness (Jer. 33:16 Rom. 5:17)	Our righteousness is a personal righteousness or a self-righteousness (Isa. 64:6 Phil. 3:9)
Salvation requires not just faith in God but comes through faith in Christ (John 14:1 Rom. 3:22 4:3,4)	Salvation is through faith in ourselves (Luke 18:9–14)
Salvation is only through Jesus Christ (Isa. 43:11 Hos. 13:4 John 14:6 Acts 4:12)	God is revealed to man in many ways: as Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, etc.
Salvation is a matter of God's righteousness (Rom. 5:21)	Salvation is related to our righteousness (Matt. 19:16–22 Luke 18:9)
Our righteousness comes by faith (Rom. 4:4,5 10:10)	Our righteousness comes by works (Luke 10:25–37 Tit. 3:5)
* I don't want this to be confused with positive volition. There is a sense in which we seek God. We have a desire to have a relationship with Him; to know Him. However, God must come to us as a response to our positive volition; if He did not, we would have no way of knowing Him.	

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

The offering brought by the two sons is an indication of the condition of their heart; that is, Abel recognizes that God expects blood sacrifice of the innocent for his covering and Cain does not. Cain thinks that he must work and do something difficult, and then give that to God. This is because, at least at this point in time, Cain is an

unbeliever and Abel is a believer in Jesus Christ. Heb. 11:4 confirms this: **By faith, Abel offered to God a superior sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God Himself giving approval to his gifts [i.e., his offering] and through it [his faith] even though he is dead, he still speaks.**" (Heb. 11:4). Abel's gift or offering showed that he was righteous. He believed in Jesus Christ and his gift was a witness to that faith. Even though he was killed, the quality of his offering due to his faith still stand as a testimony even until today. **Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness** (Heb. 9:22b).

God has respect or regard for the offering of Abel but not for Cain. The word respect is the Hebrew word *shâ'âh* (שָׁאָה) [pronounced *shaw-GAW*] and it means *to simply gaze upon*. By implication, it means *to consider, to inspect, to look upon steadily with interest*. When Abel brought his offering, God continued to look upon it with interest and regard (Qal imperfect) and when Cain brought his offering, the offering of his own works, God did not even look at it (Qal perfect). When Jesus Christ stopped appearing physically to man, we do not know. My personal picture here is that these two brothers see our Lord face to face (our Lord would be in human form or in the form of an angel). He continues to look at what Abel has brought Him but He does not even glance at what Cain has brought. It is not unlike attending a party and two guests arrive at the same time and both present a gift to the host; the host takes one and admires it and thanks the guest for it. The other one is not taken from the second guest; nor is it even acknowledged. This is God the Son that is doing this and Cain should realize that there is a reason for it. Instead of examining his own gift or his own life (which is lacking in faith in Jesus Christ), his anger burns against his brother.

As is pointed out by Zodhiates, notice that God first mentions the person then the offering. The offering was an indication of the state of their heart; Abel was a believer and trusted in Jesus Christ and Cain was not necessarily an unbeliever, but he was a believer who trusted in the works of his own hands. That is, his human efforts were his works before God. Still, even though Cain was wrong, God came to him:

**Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"**  
[Gen. 4:6]

God knows why Cain is angry; He is omniscient. However, with unbelievers, God must reach out and initiate the conversation, as it were. The same is true for believers out of fellowship. God speaks first. Cain's anger and the fallen face—an expression of disappointment after all of that work—are both in the Qal perfect. The perfect is a completed action. The imperfect is used with God speaking to Cain, meaning that He had begun to speak to Cain or (later on in this passage) that this was another portion of what He said to Cain. There were no widely accepted rules of behavior in the first days. Cain does not hide his anger nor does he play poker.

**"If you do well [or, if what you do is pleasing], surely you will be accepted [or, lifted up]. And if you do not do well, sin is stretch out [and resting] at the opening; and its desire is for you, but you are master [over] it [the opening]."** [Gen. 4:7]

"If you do well [or, if what you do is pleasing], surely you will be accepted [or, lifted up]. And if you do not do well, sin is stretch out [and resting] at the opening; and its desire is for you, but you are master [over] it [the opening]." This is the first extremely difficult verse in this narrative in Genesis. Translating the first phrase is difficult because the Hebrew word means *to please* as well as *to do well*. Cain's offering was not pleasing to God. It was not a part of God's salvation plan for Cain (or anyone else) to bring our own works to Him. Unfortunately, there is no first person masculine suffix on this verb, so it would be improper to translate this *if you please me*. The NASB throws in the word countenance after this phrase, as if God is concerned about "lifting Cain's countenance." There is no word for countenance in this verse. God is concerned with Cain's salvation. Cain's countenance has fallen and God is going to lift Cain up if Cain does what is pleasing to God. The verb translated *accepted* means to be lifted up and it is in the Qal infinitive construct. It is an action which occurs simultaneously with the main verb (with only two notable exceptions in the OT) and does not have person, number, gender or suffix. We must, at best, infer this from the verse. It is tied to the main verb so that we would take the person number and gender of the main verb rather than change any of those. Therefore, this is a reference to Cain, not to his countenance. The infinitive construct can operate like an infinitive or a gerund in our language. Often it is translated like a verbal noun. The first phrases are probably more literally translated, *shall there not, if you do what is pleasing, be an uplifting?*

The second sentence gives the alternate option and it is a negation of the verb found in the first sentence. *If you do not do well [or, if you do not what is pleasing]*. Chāṭṭā'th (חָטָאָת) [pronounced *khat-TAWTH*] can mean *sin* or *sin-offering*. However, because it is being used here for the first time in the Bible; and since sacrifices have not been standardized as of yet, this would mean *sin, offense or a sinful thing*. This sinful thing is said *to be stretched out or laying down* at Cain's opening (sometimes translated *door*). Rābats (רָבַט) [pronounced *raw<sup>b</sup>-VAHTS*] is a word used primarily of animals in a resting or relaxed position. The word for *desire* is an intense longing<sup>24</sup>, found in only two other places: Gen. 3:16 (an intense longing of a woman for a man) and SOS 7:11 (as an intense longing of a man for a woman). I cannot buy that we are speaking of Abel's intense desire here and there is not a first person masculine suffix, so it is not our Lord's *intense desire*. However, Satan desires to have Cain, just as he desired to have Peter, to sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31).

The verse as translated sounds as though we must master sin or master our desire, but both of them are in the feminine singular and the suffix to the verb for *to master or to have dominion over* is third masculine singular. The only thing found in the third masculine singular is *door*. However, it does not necessarily mean *door*; it can mean *gate, entryway, entrance, opening, etc.* I don't know that we have houses just yet in this time period, or even tents where there is some kind of a door. This is not revealed to us. Just as Satan was lying in wait for Eve, he is also lying in wait for Cain, waiting for an opening. Jesus calls him a murderer from the very beginning in John 8:44, referring to this very incident and to the fall of man, which resulted in the death of the human race (both physical and spiritual). Cain has free will and Cain is the master of this opening, this entrance. He can allow Satan to inspire the first murder (which will spring forth out of hatred and jealousy) or he can close this opening to sin. I don't like the word *crouch*, because it sounds too much as though *sin* is lying in wait to pounce and that is not what the word means. It refers to a position of rest. It is always there. *Sin* could very likely be *Satan* as well as an act of sin, since the verb *resting* is generally used of an animal. It is up to Cain to open up to it or not. Cain is not a master of sin, nor can he be a master of Satan or Satan's desire. However, he is the master of the opening which he can chose to give to Satan or not.

However, Cain has been formulating an idea. He has watch Abel kill these little sheep or sin offerings; how he uses the blade to cut the carotid and how the blood flows out. Cain is exception brilliant and has quickly put two and two together to devise a plan. He lures Abel out to a field, away from the rest of the family:

**And Cain said to his brother Abel. It came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother and killed him.** [Gen. 4:8]

The first sentence of this verse appears to be incomplete, as we would expect the content of what Cain said listed next.<sup>25</sup> They have guessed that the content of the statement has been removed from the Bible (this may have dropped off the original manuscript from which Moses worked—we don't know for certain). However, it is a Greek idiom where Cain would speak to Abel, *saying*. We could translate it *And Cain spoke to Abel*; but that does not appear to be accurate. The *Massorah* indicates that there is a space here. The *Samaritan Pentateuch*, *Septuagint*, *Syriac Version*, *Vulgate* and *Targum of Jonathan* all supply the quote, "Let us go into the field." If this quote belongs here, we have not lost much with its loss. It is also a logical phrase to add, which could have occurred.

I mentioned the targums and a number of ancient translation. Here is a brief background of each.

<sup>24</sup> The LXX translates this in these two places as a verb denoting submission, which seems to fit, in a way, with the context of both verses (the same verb, which clearly means *to rule over*, is found immediately afterward in both cases). It is not this clear-cut in Song of Solomon, however. It is the Shepherd's *desire* for the woman as spoken by the woman; therefore, it is unlikely that it would mean *submission* in this case. Another possibility, it that the word originally meant *submission* and, through the centuries, came to mean *desire*. Although the Hebrew language is said to have changed very little over the several centuries during which the Bible was written, it is likely that it changed some.

<sup>25</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 56.

## Ancient Translations of the Bible

Translation	Background
<b>The Targums</b>	<p>The Jews were removed from the Land of Promise in 586 B.C. under the fifth stage of national discipline and taken to Babylon. When the Jews returned to the land 70 years later, they spoke Chaldean (western Aramaic) rather than Hebrew. So that the Scriptures could be understood when read in the synagogue, there was a loose translation given of them in Aramaic. This was eventually written down as the Onkelos Targum and as the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel. These targums date back to the century before the birth of Christ, although the earliest copies of them which we have only date back to A.D. 500. Furthermore, these are paraphrases rather than translations, so there is some interpretation thrown in, and a lot of extra explanatory text. The two named are the most well-known of the ancient targums.</p> <p>It is only recently that this translation is becoming available on the internet.</p>
<b>The Greek Septuagint</b>	<p>This is generally a careful translation from the Hebrew into the Greek done around 200–100 B.C., supposedly done by 70 scholars (for this reason, it is also called the LXX, which means <i>the Seventy</i>). This translation would have been based upon Hebrew manuscripts dating as far back as 400 B.C. and even before. This is particularly helpful in 3 ways: (1) some difficult Hebrew words are translated into the Greek, so that we have a better idea as to what these words mean; (2) some portions of the LXX contain portions of verses which appear to have been dropped out of later Hebrew text; and (3) this mostly confirms to us the great accuracy of the Hebrew text, from which many modern translations are made. Let me add one more important function of the LXX: the Greek translation reveals that the Bible has stood essentially unchanged for centuries. No theological group ever got a hold of the Bible and made it conform to their doctrines. There is a clear bias in some modern translations; but the text upon which they are based has stood firm going back to around 400 B.C. at least (which is when the Old Testament had been completed).</p> <p>The Septuagint became the “Christian Bible” in the ancient world. Many early Christians spoke Greek, so it is only natural that they would gravitate towards this version of the Old Testament.</p> <p>The oldest Greek translations that we have today are the Chester Beatty Papyri, which contains 9 Old Testament Books in the Greek Septuagint and which dates back to between A.D. 100-400; and the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus each contain almost the entire Old Testament of the Greek Septuagint and they both dated around A.D. 350.</p>

## Ancient Translations of the Bible

### Translation

### Background

It should be noted that the Septuagint was not the only Greek translation of the Old Testament. In fact, Origen, in A.D. 240–250, developed *Origen’s Hexapla*, which was a 6 parallel column text of the Old Testament. In the first column was the original Hebrew text; in the second was the Hebrew text transliterated into Greek letters; in the third was the literal translation of Aquila (a Greek translation of the Old Testament, circa A.D. 130); in the fourth was the idiomatic revision of Symmachus (a Greek paraphrase of the Old Testament, where the overall meaning was key); in the fifth was Origen’s own revision of the LXX; and in the sixth was the Greek revision by Theodotion. So, the idea of a parallel Bible goes back to around A.D. 250. Unfortunately, we have no copies of Origen’s Hexapla today. This would have been a huge manuscript and not easy to produce or sell.

### The Latin Vulgate

Even as Rome conquered much of the known world, they held onto the Greek culture and the Greek language. However, after awhile, more and more people in the Roman empire began to speak Latin. Therefore, a translation was needed into the Latin, and that was done by St. Jerome. There already were a variety of texts and translations at that time, such as the Old Latin version of the Old Testament. Between A.D. 390–405, Jerome did a new Latin translation of the Old Testament, which appears to have been based on Hebrew manuscripts, but he apparently used the Greek LXX and other ancient translations as well. The history is more complex than this, but this is a reasonable summary.

The Latin Vulgate is often used as the basic text for many Catholic versions of the Bible although it is more common for modern English translations approved by the Catholic church use the extent Hebrew manuscripts as well.

Jerome apparently translated portions of the apocrypha (the books written in between the Old and New Testaments), but it is not clear that he translated all of them and it appears as if he treated them as separate works from the Old Testament (that is, he did not consider them inspired).

Jerome’s Latin translation is excellent and very dependable. I have yet to come across any passage in Jerome’s Latin translation which is decidedly Catholic. I am not saying there is no bias in the Latin Vulgate; I am simply stating that I have never come across any (most of my work is in the Old Testament).

### The Peshitta (the Syriac text)

Syriac is a dialect or collection of dialects from the eastern Aramaic language. We do not know for certain who made this translation into Syriac and there are even some who claim it is the original language for the New Testament. It appears possible that the Syriac version of the Old Testament was done in the first or second centuries A.D. Geisler and Nix place this time period as late as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (or even later) and that it is the work of many unnamed people. It appears as though our earliest manuscript of the Old Testament in Syriac dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Of these ancient translations, the Greek and the Latin are the closest to the Masoretic text (the Hebrew). The Peshitta varies slightly more than the Greek and the Latin, but I have come across many instances where the Syriac and Latin agree and are at variance with the Greek. The targums are not very reliable with entire new sentences and phrases thrown in.



However, when it comes to the Greek, Syriac and Latin, the ways in which they differ from the Hebrew text are quite trivial and often represent the constraints of the language. For instance, in the Hebrew, the word *face* is always in the plural. However, it sounds goofy to us in the English to translate this literally to *his faces*; so it is translated *his face*. Because this is just the way it is, no English translation has a footnote telling you, *literally, from the Hebrew, this reads "his faces."* Therefore, many of the differences which we find are simply grammatical nuances in one language which are not found in the other language.

What I personally do not find is, some sort of theological bias slipping in. I don't see a difference in Latin and Hebrew, and then think to myself, "There is that old Catholic bias slipping in again." Several modern English translations show much more of an intentional bias than can be found in the differences between the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Syriac manuscripts.

We have nearly complete Hebrew manuscripts, but they are dated later than you might think: the Aleppo Codex: contains the complete Old Testament and is dated around A.D. 950. However, more than a quarter of this Codex was destroyed in anti-Jewish riots in 1947.<sup>26</sup> There is also the Codex Leningradensis, which is the complete Old Testament in Hebrew copied by the last member of the Ben Asher family in A.D. 1008. There are slightly earlier fragments of manuscripts which are still in existence, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are dated back to 200 B.C. to A.D. 70 and contain the entire book of Isaiah and portions of every other Old Testament book except Esther. It is the Dead Sea Scrolls which have confirmed to us the accuracy of the Hebrew texts which we depend upon today.

This doctrine will also be found in **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

These ancient translations can be found online:

The Targum	<a href="http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/">http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/</a>
The Hebrew	<a href="http://qbible.com/hebrew-old-testament/">http://qbible.com/hebrew-old-testament/</a>
The Greek	<a href="http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/lxxmorph/">http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/lxxmorph/</a>
The Latin	<a href="http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&amp;b=1">http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&amp;b=1</a>
The Syriac	<a href="http://www.studylight.org/desk/?l=en&amp;query=Genesis+1&amp;section=0&amp;translation=pes&amp;oq=Genesis&amp;new=1">http://www.studylight.org/desk/?l=en&amp;query=Genesis+1&amp;section=0&amp;translation=pes&amp;oq=Genesis&amp;new=1</a>

Sources:

<http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/T/TARGUM/> accessed February 20, 2012.

<http://mb-soft.com/believe/txx/targum.htm> accessed February 20, 2012.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate> accessed February 20, 2012.

<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/bibleorigin.html> accessed February 20, 2012 and appears to be a good resource for this type of information.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/vulgate1.html> accessed February 20, 2012.

Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1980, p. 507–508, 512–513, 539.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Up until this time, no person has ever died and it is very possible that Cain doubts the promise of death delivered by Jesus Christ and repeated to him by his mother and father. However, he has observed the death of sacrifices

<sup>26</sup> Even though I find nearly this exact phrasing in a dozen places on the internet, none of these sites indicate where these riots took place. There were apparently anti-Jewish riots in Britain in 1947, but it appears as though the Aleppo Codex was originally smuggled from Syria to Israel. Geisler and Nix, whom I trust more than information on the internet, write that it was *reported* to have been destroyed, but added that it would be the basis for the *New Hebrew Bible* **produced** by the Hebrew University. Based on the description in Amazon, there does not appear to be a problem with the Aleppo Codex.

and decides to do the same to Abel. There are quite a number of words for *kill* in the Hebrew; and each stem of the verb alters the meaning. Hârag (גָּרַח) [pronounced *haw-RAHG*] means to kill and ruthless violence is implied. It is also used of God killing in stern judgement. It is occasionally used for the judicial killing by man or for the killing of beasts.

Satan was very much involved with the first people on this earth. There were few enough of them to where he could keep a handle on everything. He would lie in wait and influence in whatever way that he could. It angered Satan to see Abel make sacrifices to God and it angered Cain. Exactly how Cain was influenced and in what way, I do not know. Today we can point toward television, newspapers, magazines and other people. However, Cain did not have near as many distractions and influences. He was religious, but he wanted to show God what he could do for Him. He worked hard in his garden and was proud of this work and expected that God would be pleased to see all that he had produced. There was not a problem with the amount of his gift, its condition or anything else. It was just that his gift did not involve a blood sacrifice of an innocent animal and therefore, it was meaningless to God. This caused Cain to become very indignant and self-righteous and angry with Abel. Out of all these mental attitude sins preceded the first murder. There was no alcohol involved, no drugs, no fighting. It was the first holy war, you might say. This murder was cold-blooded and premeditated and brought on by religion against one of God's own.

**Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where [is] Abel, your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"** [Gen.4:9]

This is grace that God comes to Cain and questions him directly. This is the third human being; the firstborn of Adam and Eve. God always searches us out. This is grace. To remain unbelievers, we must fight grace and turn away from Jesus Christ at every opportunity for our entire lives. When Cain said that he did not know where Abel was, he used the Qal perfect tense—he is claiming that he has absolutely no idea. It is not just this moment but a completed action.

**And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's bloods is screaming to me from the ground."** [Gen. 4:10]

*Done* is the same word used in Gen. 2:4 and 3:1; the same word is used for God making the universe and the animals is used here. Out of his mental attitude sins and jealousy, Cain has manufactured the first murder. *Blood* is in the plural, which is not the way it is usually found (see Gen. 9:4,6 or 37:22). Early on, it is possible that not much had been taught to the first family about the separation of the soul, spirit and body. The blood is normally associated with the body. However, here, it is associated with the physical death of the body and the separation of the soul from the body; the soulish death. The plural might be used to express great emotion and great violence. *Crying* is no longer used for screaming loudly or in distress; so I translated this *screaming* instead.

**"And now you are cursed from [or, by reason of] the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's bloods from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth."** [Gen. 4:11–12]

This is the first murder and this is the firstborn of the earth. God is quite gracious to Cain in this case. In later dispensations, God would prescribe execution for murder. Here, God will banish Cain from this area. Actually, this will be mutually agreed upon, because Cain could face retribution from his father or from any of his sisters. A later brother might come after Cain. So Cain does not have any choice in this matter.

Cain was previously quite successful in his farming efforts and God has told him that this will become more and more difficult. This could be specific to Cain and it may have to do with where he is banished to. In any case, the land has become more and more difficult to grow vegetables from. We are in a world which is steadily decaying. Complex, in general, proceeds to less complex. The fertile and the beautiful become unyielding and ugly.

**And Cain said to the Lord, "My iniquity too great to take away!?"** [Gen. 4:13]

There are two different takes on this quotation of Cain's. It is usually translated "My punishment is too great to bear!" The first word is the adjective (in the masculine singular) for *great in magnitude or degree*. 'âvôwn (עוון) [pronounced *gaw-VOHN*] primarily means *iniquity*. There are some who do not recognize this word as meaning *punishment for iniquity* and some who recognize that meaning in only a scattering of places. *Guilt from iniquity* is also a second meaning. However, I think it would be best, unless there is some particular reason to translate the word differently than it is most often used, to retain the meaning *iniquity*. *Iniquity* has the first person singular suffix. The verb is the Qal infinitive construct of nâsâ' nâsâ' (נשח) [pronounced *naw-SAW*] and the affixed preposition min (מִן) [pronounced *min*]. The preposition is used primarily with verbs expressing *removal* or *separation*. The verb is a verbal noun. It means *to bear or carry* and with this preposition *to take away or to remove*. It is occasionally translated *to forgive*, but I do not believe that would be correct here (and that is not a primary meaning). There is no verb per se in this sentence. There is great emphasis and emotion expressed here. Cain has no idea as to the severity of the sin which he has committed. He sees Abel kill little, innocent woollies all the time. He was angry, a natural human reaction, and he was smart enough to figure out how to deal with that anger. He doesn't even ask for forgiveness; he expects for this iniquity be removed. He has seen God remove other iniquities yet forgiveness does not come to mind. This is because the firstborn of mankind is an unbeliever. He is saying, "What? Is there a problem here? You can't just take away this iniquity? You have to mete out punishment?" Cain, in some respects, is very moral; he is hard-working; he brings to God the fruits of his labors, as does any sincere, religious person. He cannot see any reason for killing an animal and bringing that to God. Yet, he is very amoral when it comes to the killing of Abel. He used the same method as Abel did to kill his sacrifices; why should there be any punishment or consequences tied to that? Cain just happened to be smart enough to realize that could be done to man also.

**"Behold, you have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I shall be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me."** [Gen. 4:14]

*Driven out* or *cast out* is in the Piel perfect; it is an intensive, completed action with permanent results. The preposition of removal or separation from the last verse is used again. Cain loves farming and it is apparent that will no longer be a rewarding venture for him. He associates Y<sup>e</sup>howah with that area, not realizing God's omnipresence, and is religious, so he finds the removal of God from his life to be a punishment. He recognizes that others, notably his father or a brother (it is likely that there were several other brothers; the Bible, although it only mentions Cain and Abel, does not preclude the possibility of Adam and Eve having many sons by this time). Certainly, Cain and Abel are in their teens or older by this point in time (probably late teens or older) and logic would dictate that there are other brothers and sisters. God only records the first birth, the first murder and the line of Jesus Christ.

Cain's concern for his own life, much greater than his concern for Abel's life, seems to indicate that there are more people on the earth than just Adam, Eve, Abel and himself. He does have a wife (v. 17) which would be a sister (still, she could be his right woman as their gene pool was far superior to ours). It is unlikely that Adam and Eve did not have a sexual relationship for 15–25 years which produced children. Very likely at this time there were at least a dozen siblings to Cain. When Cain is concerned that he will be killed, he uses the same word as is found in v. 8, also in the Qal imperfect. He actually thought that he could hide this from God. Realizing that God knew meant that anyone could know.

**So the Lord said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord placed on Cain a mark, lest anyone finding him should slay him [or, the Lord shall ordain on behalf of Cain a pledge of assurance that anyone who finds him will not kill him].** [Gen. 4:15]

The first two words in a quote from our Lord are: likely lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced *low*] (which is a negative prefix, similar to the alpha primitive in Greek, meaning *not* and kên (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], which means *so*. This is a disputed reading; however, this is what *The Emphasized Bible* and Owen both seem to think; and, contextually, it makes sense (the other reading is *therefore*). *Sevenfold* literally means *seven times as much*, but is a figure

of speech which gives emphasis to what is to be done. *Vengeance will be taken* is in the Hophal imperfect, which is causative action. God will cause vengeance to be taken upon this person.

For Cain's benefit, God placed or put a mark upon him. The verb has a wide variety of applications, including *to set, ordain, or appoint* but more often *to put, place or set*. *Cain* has a lamed (ל) prefix, which has close to ten pages of applications in *Brown-Driver-Briggs*. This word denotes direction, but not necessarily motion. It can express locality or denote the object of the verb. It can even mean *with reference to or regarding*. The Hebrew word for *mark* is 'ōwth (אֹת) [pronounced *oath*] and it can mean *sign, token, pledge, symbol or omen*. The reason that this is translated *mark* is that the verb associated with this noun can mean *mark*. This could just as easily mean *the Lord shall ordain on behalf of Cain a pledge of assurance that anyone who finds him will not kill him*. Because of the KJV translation, many have speculated just what is the *mark of Cain*. In Josh. 2:12 there is no physical mark involve yet the same word is used. The *mark of Rahab* as not a mark, but a verbal pledge or vow to deal kindly and faithfully with her (Josh. 2:14). In other words the sign to Rahab was a vow or a pledge from the two spies. One of the more humorous signs is when God comes to Moses and tells Moses that he is to lead Israel out of bondage. Moses asks for a sign and God tells him that he, Moses, will lead the people to this mountain (which is outside of Egypt and on the way to Israel) and they will worship there. So, the sign to Moses and the people that he will lead them out of Egypt and into Israel is the fact that he will lead them out of Egypt and into Israel.

Sign is also used for a very recognizable physical phenomena. Moses was to show the Pharaoh a staff, throw it upon the ground and it would turn into a snake. He was also to put his hand inside his cloak, pull it out and it would be leprous like snow. Both of these things were called signs by God. Neither was permanent and they both represented to the Pharaoh that Moses was from God. That is, the signs themselves were meaningless; it was what they signified that was important. A sign to Eli in 1Sam. 2:24 was that his two sons would both die on the same day.

Cain is concerned that he is not killed in revenge and God either gives him a sign or a mark or an assurance. Since this term doesn't seem to be used for an actual physical mark which is put upon someone; furthermore, I am not certain what that physical mark would be which would keep anyone from killing Cain. Certainly, there has been a population explosion or sorts, but still everyone would know everyone else. God wouldn't come to them as a whole and tell them not kill the guy with the red dot on his head because that's Cain; everyone knew who Cain was. God just has to say the word that no one is to touch Cain and that sets up the limits. More important than any physical mark to Cain would be God's assurance He would see to it that no one kills Cain or that person would be avenged sevenfold.

A question that you should be asking yourself: this is the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament is a severe, harsh God. What happened to *an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth*? God is not just pardoning Cain, he is providing Cain with protection. God did not give man the law yet. There is no organized society as such yet. There is a society, but it is just a group of people with nothing more than social mores. There is no law, no governing body, no court system, no police force, etc. This may be hard to understand, but what that means is that anyone who killed Cain would be guilty of revenge, hatred, murder, and vigilantism. A system of law must be in place in order for someone to be guilty of breaking the law. A court system must be in effect to impartially judge those who have gone against the law. Law is not effective or meaningful unless it is impartial. There could be no impartiality in the killing of Cain and God despises anarchy.

**Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.**

[Gen. 4:16]

In the dispensation of innocence and the dispensation of fallen man, God had a visible presence. In innocence, it was in the garden and in man's fallen sate, it was just outside the garden. When Cain left this area, he left the visible presence of Jesus Christ.

Back in v. 12, when God tells Cain that he will be a wanderer on the earth (and Cain confirms this in v. 14), *wanderer* is the word nûwd (נָדוּד) [pronounced *nood*] and it means *to move to and fro or to wander*. It has a related

meaning which I would guess came centuries afterward and that is *show grief, lament, shake the head to and fro, to console or to deplore (and taunt)*. The latter usage of this word occur about the time of Jeremiah and the former usage in Genesis. Language develops by associations made. Cain was associated with this word and Cain was banished from God's presence as the first murderer. Because of this, Cain was grieved and he lamented; therefore, it is likely that this word came to have that connotation. Furthermore, as a person can wander to and fro, the head can be shaken to and fro; that being true and given the connotation of *nûwd*, shaking the head to and fro came to be association with grief or deploring but then also with sympathy, as some would feel sorry for Cain (at least he did). In this verse, the word *Nod* is from the Hebrew word *Nôwd* (נֹד) [pronounced *nohd*]. The only difference between the words is a dagesh (the little dot next to the *w*) which becomes a cholem (a tiny dot above the *w*). Prior to the vowel points (which did not exist in the original manuscripts) these words would be identical. *Land* and *earth* are the same word in the Hebrew: *'erets* (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*]. Context would determine the usage. It is generally agreed that this verse refers to a proper noun, taken from the curse placed upon Cain. Cherubim had been placed at the east entrance of the Garden of Eden to prevent man from entering into the garden the taking from the tree of life. Cain settled in this area fearing for his life.

**And Cain had sexual relations with his woman and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he [Cain] built a city and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son.** [Gen. 4:17]

Philologists and theologians give several possible meanings for Enoch: *consecration, teaching, initiation*. It is not too far in structure from the word for *trained, dedicated or experienced*. It might have had a meaning and it might have just sounded good to his mother. Speaking of Enoch's mother, Cain married one of his sisters. Certainly Adam and Eve were multiplying and filling the earth. It is likely that they had a child every year and this would make the world population at least 18. Given the very long lives that they had, this incident of Cain and Abel, although portrayed in literature as *young* (in their teens); this incident could have occurred at age 100 for all we know. Cain was married, which indicates that he was probably at least 16 and likely closer to 20 or above. Marriage in antediluvian society would have been among very close relatives, many of whom were originally brother and sister. There were no sins associated with this and no prohibitions. The gene pool at that point in time was strong enough to withstand intermarriage. However, man has degenerated since that time and marriage among siblings or even cousins often results in genetic problems for the offspring. God prohibits marriages among close relatives in Lev. 18:6–17.

Given the longevity and the prolific nature of the early human race, populations must have grown quickly so that Cain built a city for his progeny and named it Enoch, who was likely his firstborn after his relocation. A city at that point in time likely consisted of a dozen or so dwelling places, but since Cain did not have as much success with farming, he became a builder. This building likely took place once there had been a population in that area to warrant such building. Again, just guessing, but by the time Cain's progeny reached 10–20 in number is when he likely began to build. Furthermore, there is a desire on the part of some men to leave some part of themselves behind. Artists of all sorts are famous for this; and builders. This is how man makes his mark in the world. It is not necessarily inherently sinful, although the motivation at times can be directly attributed to sin. Many of us want to leave our mark in the world in some way. For some, it is their offspring; for others their legacy; and still others their writings, their art or their building. This could be related to Cain's building this city and the desire to get most of his family out of his house may have been another portion of his motivation. There was a standing mandate, if you will, that, due to the precedent set by Adam and Eve, a man will leave parents and cleave to his woman. However, as was also covered during that time, this verse was very possibly an addition, divinely inspired, however, from a later writer (perhaps added as late as Moses' compilation).

**Now to Enoch was born Irad and Irad sired [or, better: *caused to be born*] Mehujael; and Mehujael sired Methushael; and Methshael sired Lamech. And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one Adah and the name of the other Zillah.** [Gen. 4:18–19]

*Sired*, in this context, is a good one-word translation for *yâlad* (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAHd*] as long as you keep in mind that it may skip a generation or two. *Caused to be born* is even more accurate (the use for the word *begot* is good; it is just Old English). Not every person is memorable; furthermore, Cain likely had many more children than just Enoch (just as their progeny are not all represented here). The meanings of their names show us that

Cain was not godless but very religious. This religion was passed on to his progeny. Irad means *townsman*, Mahuiael means *smitten of God*, Methushael means *man of God* and Lamech means *powerful*. This means that Cain had done some serious religious thinking and had passed his thinking on down to his sons and sons' sons. Lamech is mentioned for two reasons; he is the first recorded male to take to himself two wives. The divine precedent was one man and one woman. Since Cain had built a city and was a man of great importance. any direct descendent of Cain would probably do well during his first 20 or 30 years. Therefore, for that period of time, Lamech was probably a successful person and he was successful enough to command two wives. There is no judgement passed against him for this, however. There is still no law on the earth. Lamech's wives names mean *ornament* (or, *beauty*) and *flighty* (or, *shade*). What likely occurred with these names is that the names came to mean these various things according to the person and personality of the one named.

**And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and [possess] livestock. And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.** [Gen. 4:20–21]

The line of Cain continued and prospered. Certain of those in his line became famous for shepherding and for the arts. There is disagreement as to the meaning of the latter instrument; some think that it is several reeds together and others view it as a bagpipe prototype (Thieme would be proud). Jabal means *shadow production* and Jubal means *sounds*.

**As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.** [Gen. 4:22]

Archeology has a lot of theories concerning the bronze age and the iron age. It didn't take but a few generations of man before he developed musical instruments, buildings, bronze and iron. Keep in mind that man at this time was in the antediluvial age. He developed many things which were lost in the flood. Civilizations come and go, as do nations; and some advance to incredible heights of technology; and then fall behind. We had periods of time three hundred years prior to the birth of our Lord when the Greeks not only knew that the world was round but they knew the earth's circumference. By the time of the dark ages, almost two millennium later, this information was lost and there were some who thought that you could sail off the earth. All this means is that technological advances do not always and continually move forward. It moves forward, it moves backward, it stays in the same place. We are not evolving as a people, and even though we live in an age of great technological advance, the technology could be lost overnight. My point is that fire, music, bronze and iron go back almost to the dawn of human history. Man was exceptionally brilliant during his beginnings on earth. Furthermore, our bodies were exceptionally strong, durable and man lived for centuries; allowing him the ability to build upon his own knowledge. Bronze and iron may have been developed separately at a later date after the flood; but here is where it was first invented.

It's interesting, and I don't know the reason why, but Lamech's wives and the one daughter are the first women named following Eve. Furthermore, Cain, the first religious man and the first murderer, is the man whose line is first followed. The Bible does not focus on the reaction of Adam and Eve nor does it go immediately to the line of Seth, but it stops here at Cain's line and examines it. From Cain developed architecture, metal working and the arts in the antediluvian era. So that we see the natural progression of sin, we have the next few verses:

**And Lamech said [sang] to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice; you wives of Lamech, give heed to my tale. For I have killed a man for wounding me; and a young man for striking me; If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."** [Gen. 4:23–24]

Lamech became the first folk singer and sang this type of tripe to his wives. He was apparently in a barroom brawl with a family and killed a father and son (or a young man and an older man). Everyone knew that Cain got away with murder; and further, that God would see that his death would be avenged. So Lamech sang that since he killed two men, he would receive even more protection. There is no remorse; Lamech is so proud that he write a song about it and sings this song to his wives. We have seen why God protected Cain following his murder of Abel. Lamech totally misapplied that mandate of God. Our first recorded misapplication of doctrine.

I have placed the last two verses of chapter 4 with chapter 5 because they sound as though they are a preface to this book. Whether they are in fact a preface is not a point of doctrine nor does any doctrine rise or fall with this choice on my part. There are things in the Bible which are never covered in any detail because that information is unimportant to us spiritually. For instance, the exact type of government that a church should have, who the actual authors of *Genesis* were, from whence did Moses obtain his source material, etc. These things are a matter of intellectual curiosity and too often of theological debate, but spiritually, they are unimportant.

**And Adam had sexual relations with his woman again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for [she said] "God has decreed for me another seed instead of Abel, because Cain murdered him." [Gen. 4:25]**

In the Hebrew, Seth is Shêth (שֵׁת) [pronounced *shayth*] and it means *tumult*. In Eve's quote, the verb used is shîyth (שִׂיַת) [pronounced *sheeth*] and found throughout the Bible in many varied applications. We last looked at this word when God *gave* a sign to Cain for his protection. When God *placed* enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed, that word was shiyth. Brown-Driver-Briggs point out that this almost is equivalent to *give* in some instances<sup>27</sup>, but finding a good one word (or several word) translation for all instances has been difficult. May I suggest that when God is the subject and shiyth is in the Qal perfect that it means *to decree* or *to set, place or give by decree*. With this quote, it is clear that Eve has grown spiritually over the past few decades. She and Adam were lovers of language and they used their words with a certain amount of intelligent playfulness. This choice of name for Seth mixes the divine decrees with tumult. Why? This use possibly means that it was a difficult labor or a difficult birth. Possibly the name *Seth* was chosen because this was the man that God appointed and it would be through this man that the earth is shaken.

Soon after the murder, Cain fled with his wife. This means that Adam and Eve had other children as previously noted. It is possible—in fact, likely—that their children had all been female, except for Cain and Abel up until that time and it is possible that they did not have the same hope for the other male children as they did originally for Cain. God had decreed that the woman would bear a son who would crush Satan, the serpent and Eve originally that it was to be Cain. When Cain and Abel grew, she changed her opinion and thought that it would be Abel (as this verse suggests). Now she believes that it is Seth and she is correct insofar as this will be the line of our Lord.

**And to Seth—to him also—was born a son and he called his name Enosh. At that time, he began to call on the name of Yahweh. [Gen. 4:26]**

The Hebrew word for Enosh is ʿĒnôwsh (אֱנוֹשׁ) [pronounced *ehn-OHSH*] and it appears as though meaning was derived from it rather than vice versa. This word in later Scripture came to be used for *man* or *mankind*. It was almost a poetical use. It is found scattered throughout the Bible, but primarily enowsh is found in Job. The last phrase of this verse is significant. Thieme said that this is the beginning of evangelism or a wave of evangelism. I see this as a sadder note in some ways. My take on this (and I may change my mind later as I go further into Genesis) is that Jesus Christ, who would come bodily to visit Adam and the woman both in the garden and outside the garden; who was physically before Cain and Abel and their sacrifices, no longer came to the earth in bodily form on a daily basis. There will still be theophanies but these will be rare occurrences and not everyday fellowship. As the earth becomes more and more filled with sin and rebellion, so short a time following the garden, the visible presence of God withdraws more and more. At the beginning of Gen. 4, we have God speaking directly to Cain (Gen. 4:9–15). However, we do not find such a conversation taking place after that. In fact, direct conversations after Gen. 4 are rare, often involve theophanies, and tend not to be usual occurrences. This leaves man with only one alternative: *to call upon the name of the Lord*.

*Began* is in the Hophal perfect masculine singular, and the Hophal stem carries with it both a passive and active sense. What it conveys is the subject is compelled to do something and the agent causing this is not always named. It is the least used of all the stems. Here, because our Lord no longer walks among man; no longer comes to them on a daily basis, Enosh is compelled or caused to begin to call upon the name of the Lord. The Hebrew word here has several diverse meanings. The verb is in the masculine singular, indicating that the subject

<sup>27</sup> p. 1011, but you have to look carefully; it is about 1/3 of the way through the definition

of the verb is likely one of the males named in this verse; that male probably being Enosh. It took but a little over two hundred years from the fall before God's visible presence began to be withdrawn from the presence of man. Following the verb *to become* is qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*], which means *to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name* [when followed by a lâmed]. Strong's #7121 BDB #894. This is followed by the bêyth preposition, which means *in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within* (this is not an exhaustive list). Sometimes, the bêyth preposition merely points to the object of the verb. No Strong's # BDB #88.

Some would include Gen. 4:25 and following as a part of Gen. 5.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---



# Genesis 5

**Genesis 5** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WP-compressed](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 5:1–5:32

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

- v. 24     [The Assumptions of Archaeology and Paleontology](#)
- v. 24     [Scientific Achievements of Ancient Man](#)
- v. 29     [The Possible Authors of Sections of Genesis](#)

**Introduction:** Gen. 5:1–2 sounds like the beginning of a new section, perhaps by a new author. We do not know when the oral tradition stopped and when these things began to be written down. There is no reason to think that man was not capable of writing until centuries later. Man has been a genius from the first man and has always been able to write likely from the time that this was needed, although we are not told specifically when.

There is no reason why we ought to assume that there was a need for writing at the very beginning—man was very verbal, but he was also probably very smart. It is likely that nearly every man remember everything that was said to him over the period of his life, and that he could recall whatever it was that he needed to recall. So, if Enosh and Kenan entered into some kind of an agreement, this contract did not need to be written down and notarized, because both men were there, and they both understood the terms of the contract, and each man heard and recalled what the terms of the contract were.

Sometime after Noah, man's lifespan and, logically, his mental capabilities also degenerated. There was probably a time when man knew, at the very least, the Scriptures of God. However, somewhere between Abraham (circa 2100 B.C.) and Moses (circa 1440 B.C.), I suspect, God's Word began to be written down (God tells Moses to write down the laws which He gives him in Ex. 34:27).

V. 25 carries with it an explanation as to why Seth was so important to Adam and Eve ([Adam again knew his wife and she gave birth to a son. She called his name Seth, for \[she said\] "Elohim has appointed to me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him."](#)).

Many believe that Moses collected this source material and edited it and recorded all of it under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, meaning what Moses wrote down was definitely inspired. We do not have to imagine Moses as sitting down as a secretary under God the Holy Spirit and writing down word for word as the Holy Spirit dictated. There is no indication of that. In Exodus, when God delivers the law, that is a matter of strict dictation. The fact that Moses used source material or recorded and edited from source material does not make the writings less inspired. What Moses does in Deuteronomy is a dramatic change from the previous 3 books. He gives a sermon (actually several) tying everything together for the Jews under his command, preparing them to go into the Land of Promise without him, and, at some point, both he and his people recognize that he is actually speaking the Word of God, even though it is not being dictated to him.

Dr. Luke, in his introduction to his gospel, indicates that this account was a result of compiling information from several sources. His source material may or may not have been inspired, but the resultant gospel is inspired.

That is, as we have studied, God the Holy Spirit recorded through Dr. Luke and through Moses exactly what He wanted to communicate to man, i.e., God's complete and connected thought to mankind in such a way that Dr. Luke's and Moses' personalities, vocabularies, experiences, trains of thought and literary styles remained intact, so that the very words of their writings were simultaneously the words of God and the words of man. On the other hand, this does not mean that the Law may be separated into four basic authors who wrote centuries after the exodus, each identified by the frequency of the use of the different names of God. That is liberal tripe which has been overlaid on the Scripture, taking into account several pre-existing prejudices of the creators of this theory. However, just because their concept is not Biblical, this does not mean that we must retreat to the other end of the spectrum and claim that Moses was the original author of all the portions of *Genesis*. He was a brilliant man whose authorship is, in Scripture, continually attributed to the latter four books of the law, but never to *Genesis*; although tradition places him as the author of *Genesis*. Therefore, he is likely the editor but not necessarily the original author of *Genesis*. In this chapter and in subsequent chapters, we will follow the line of Adam for at least one millennium and perhaps even two.

We have left Cain's generations with Lamech at this point and have picked up with Adam's *progeny*. . The human and legal line of Christ will proceed from Adam through Seth and through Noah into the post deluvian civilization. Why did we stop with Lamech's family? This could have been all of the information which was available to the author of that portion of the source material to *Genesis* and it may have been the last of the completely human posterity of Cain. But more of that in chapter 6.

It is possible to see the final couple verses of Gen. 4 as somewhat of a prologue to Gen. 5. They do seem to hang together as a whole. Sometimes, when examining verses word-by-word, we often lose the full impact of the overall passage sometimes. It is hard to see the forest through the trees. However, examine this as a prologue, a title and text:

[Prologue ] And Adam had sexual relations with his wife again and she gave birth to a son, and he [Adam] named him Seth, for [she said] "God has decreed for me another son [seed] in place of Abel; for Cain murdered him." And to Seth —to him also—was born a son; and he called his name Enosh. Then he began [or, was compelled to begin] to call upon the name of the Lord.

**This is the Book [or the Record] or the Generations of Adam:**

In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them *Man* in the day when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of one in his own likeness, according to his image, and he named him Seth. Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were 800 years, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died. And Seth lived 807 years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had sons and daughters. [Gen. 4:25–5:4]

It is often said that the Hebrew manner of writing back then was to take an incident and later embellish upon that incident by quoting a line or so from it. This is definitely a possibility. However, the other explanation is that when additional material was added on to God's word, the manner in which it was done was to often quote a previous verse or two to tie the writings together and then to title this section or to indicate that this is the beginning of a new section.

A problem one would think of at this point is writing material. We have been taught from early on that man began with crude pictographs scrawled on a cave wall and a written language evolved from that. It is certainly possible that some languages developed that way; however, recall that man in the antediluvian civilization was much more intelligent than we are and had likely developed a written language and writing materials and some sort of medium to write upon. Furthermore, this writing medium was not necessarily chunks of clay with indentations but something perhaps more sophisticated, but more perishable. This was likely carried upon the ark and added to as time went on. At some point in time, someone must have realized the significance of the writings and the fragility of the medium and copied it onto something which might last longer. All of this, needless to say, is pure conjecture, just as Mosaic authorship of the book of *Genesis* is pure conjecture. However, it is a reasonable theory

This passage begins what sounds like a different author. This merely means that Moses had several manuscripts to work from and chose to copy that which God the Holy Spirit led him to copy. *Book* is the Hebrew word *qêpher* (קֶפֶר) [pronounced *SAY-fur*], which means, *letter, missive, book, document, writing, scroll, tablet, register*. Strong's #5612 BDB #706. *Generations*, if you will recall, is the word later translated *genesis* in the Greek Septuagint. Man was quite interested in genealogy and sought to preserve it as best as he could. There are many people who today do the same thing with their own family line. The primary difference here is, Noah or Seth knew personally nearly every person named in Noah's genealogy (as we will see when we look at the ages of these men and when who sired when).

It is in this way that God the Holy Spirit preserves for us the line of the humanity of Jesus Christ. Here, *man*, in the singular, is said to be in the shadow-image or in the likeness of God, as it is written in Gen. 1:27. Paul quotes this in 1Cor. 11:7 when dealing with the *headware* of the man and the woman and the authority of the man. The woman is never said to be created in God's image although the Bible uses the words *created* and *built* when it comes to the creation of the woman. *Adam* and *man* are the same word in vv. 1–5. Certainly, Moses, or whoever wrote the last copy of these verses became concerned over the time period named. Even the Bible says that man's life span, under normal circumstances, is approximately 70 years (Psalm 90:10). Here is where an author, concerned that no one would believe this, would have downplayed the ages, or eliminated them. However, the ages of man as he began were all close to the millennial mark. We do not know at what age man matured, married and had children. The youngest age named for siring a child was that of Enoch, at age 65 (v. 23). The oldest named is 500 years (v. 30). The child is not the first or the last born necessarily. Adam had other sons and daughters; otherwise, Cain would have been hard pressed to find a wife, as would Seth. Prior to Seth, there were certainly born to Adam and Eve at least two sons and a daughter (and likely far more). God the Holy Spirit records here only the line of Noah, through which will come the line of our Lord.

**So all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died. And Seth lived 105 years and sired Enosh. Then Seth lived 807 years after he sired Enosh, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were 912 years and he died. And Enosh lived 90 years and sired Kenan. Then Enosh lived 815 years after he sired Kenan and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died. And Kenan lived 70 years, and became the father of Mahalel. Then Kenan lived 840 years after he sired Mahalel, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died. [Gen. 5:5–14]**

Although the genealogies throughout the Bible will sometimes skip a generation or more, it is likely that every male in Noah's ancestral line was preserve. The reason for this conclusion is the age given. So and so was a particular age when he sired his son. So we may know exactly how long the antediluvian age lasted: 1676 years (we do not know whether Adam's age was calculated from the fall or from his creation).

The meaning of Kenan is unclear; it is close to the words for *elegy* or *dirge* and also the word for *chant* or *wailing*. Thieme says that it means *deplorable*. *Mahalalel* means, according to Thieme, *praise of God*. This meaning seems to be well-agreed upon.

**And Mahalalel lived 65 years and sired Jared. Then Mahalalel lived 830 years after he sired Jared, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died. And Jared lived 162 years and sired of Enoch. Then Jared lived 800 years after he sired Enoch, and he had sons and daughters. And Enoch lived 65 years and sired Methuselah. [Gen. 5:15–21]**

*Jared* means *to descend* or *to go down*. We notice a similarity in the lines of Cain and Seth at this point. Both had descendants named *Enoch*, who in turn had descendants named Methushael (Methuselah for Seth, a different Hebrew word); and almost the last named person in the lines: *Lamech*. Satan has always been an imitator of God; a very poor imitator. He counterfeits the line of Seth as best as he could. *Enoch* might mean *trained* or *experienced* or it might mean *dedicated*. *Methuselah* means *it will be sent when he dies* (according to Thieme). Methuselah died the year the flood began.

**Then Enoch walked with God 300 years after he sired Methuselah, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were 365 years. And Enoch walked with God; and he vanished, for God took him.** [Gen. 5:22–24]

*Walked* is in the Hithpael imperfect, which is the reflexive of the Piel. This means that Enoch caused himself to walk, or *to go* with God. It means *to walk to and fro*. It is a constant, daily walk with God. This is intensive, meaning that in the state that the earth was in, this walk was a difficult, intense experience. We will see more about the corruption of the earth in chapter 6. *He vanished* (or, *he was not*), is a substantive with a third masculine singular suffix, which means *naught, vanished, nothing*.

*Took* is the Hebrew word *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*], which means, *to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize*. Strong's #3947 BDB #542. Enoch here is a type; that is a shadow image of the pre-tribulational rapture. God is about to bring great and intensive judgment upon the earth. Enoch, as God's faithful, is taken up prior to the judgement. We have a world, during Enoch's time of the corruption of flesh and evil beyond imagination. Even though we are but seven generations from Adam and Adam is still alive at this time, there has been an incredible population explosion, and by this point in time there are a number of half-angelic, half-human beings. The angels had never seen anything like a woman before and the fallen angels burned in lust for the daughters of men. At that point in time, they were able to manifest themselves physically as more than an apparition and they did (that, or they took over the bodies of men as in demon-possession) and the earth was becoming vastly corrupt. It is difficult to live in the midst of a vastly corrupt society and not to become quite corrupt yourself. Enoch managed to remain uncorrupted, unaffected by the evil about him, even though he possessed an old sin nature and was born with the imputation of Adam's original sin. Enoch was not a monk nor was he a person who went off to some hill to meditate. He had a family and sons and daughters. However, he knew God because he knew God's Word as revealed at that time. Although it is not stated, he could go directly to his great<sup>5</sup> grandfather, Adam, and find out everything that God had told Adam in the garden. Our walk with God include fellowship and God's Word, as it has always been. At that time, he could get God's Word through Adam, who walked with our Lord in the garden. As he got this information from Adam, he also walked with God.

Lest anyone examine this verse carefully and say that there is nothing about Enoch being raptured<sup>28</sup> here, we need only look to Heb. 11:5 for corroboration: **By faith-doctrine, Enoch was taken up [or transported or transferred] so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up, he was pleasing to God.**

We now need to digress somewhat. I realize that you read this chapter to yourself and either gave no thought to it or fell asleep during it. Genesis 5 has caused a lot of controversy with regards to (1) the ages of those listed; (2) the overall time period involved and (3) the dating of the antediluvian civilization. I will list some of the prominent theories and cover the basic problem which has caused theologians trouble, particularly over the past century. Theologians from centuries ago were not troubled by modern science and modern assumptions, but present-day theologians do not want to appear as though they are *alfalfa-chewing barbarians*<sup>29</sup> when faced with the assumptions and conclusions of modern science. There is also the problem of theologians latching onto the Sumerian king list. This list gives us a list of kings which reigned before and after the flood. There are parallels between this list and the Biblical account of the flood which *could* indicate the same source material. The problem here is that theologians have been so anxious to grasp at some extra-Biblical corroboration for the Genesis flood that they have assumed that this list is it.

The main cause of concern is archaeology and paleontology. Archaeology is the study of ancient man through his relics, monuments, pottery and artifacts. Paleontology is the study of past geological ages based upon the study of fossils. These sciences make several assumptions:

<sup>28</sup> Some cults make an issue out of words, such as *rapture* or *trinity* not being found in the Bible. These are theological terms which were later coined to represent theological truths which are found in the Bible. So, even though the word *rapture* is not specifically found in the English neither is it a transliteration of a Greek word or, still several synonyms are found (such as in the verse quoted and buried deep in the Greek of 2Thess. 2:3).

<sup>29</sup> I lifted this vocative from Cecil Adams, author of *The Straight Dope* books and columns.

## The Assumptions of Archaeology and Paleontology

- The age of man on this earth is very ancient;
- Man evolved from a primate-type being which was not human;
- Man either is, was or has always been in a state of evolution; that is, a progression from more primitive to less primitive to civilized to modern.

The data which these scientist collect are dropped conveniently into these slots of general agreement.

Not all Archaeologists and Paleontologists make these assumptions. These assumptions are essentially moot with regards to archaeology covering the time of around 2300 B.C. and forward.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The dating of man is accomplished by radioactive dating methods and by the strata in which the fossils have been found. There are two types of commonly used radioactive dating, carbon-14 and potassium argon dating. C-14 dating is done as follows. All living and previously living things have a certain amount of carbon in them. We constantly ingest and egest carbon and carbon carries within it a certain amount of radioactive carbon, known as C-14. When that which is living dies, it no longer ingests carbon; however, it has a certain amount of carbon within it which has a certain amount of C-14 within it. The C-14 begins to disintegrate, thus changing the ratio of C-14 to carbon within this once living organism. The half-life of C-14 is approximately 5700 years so that once a living organism dies, the C-14 within it is reduced by weight by half every 5700 years. To get an idea as to the kind of ratio that we are dealing with, there is approximately one atom of radiocarbon for every trillion molecules of carbon dioxide in the air.<sup>30</sup> It is important to realize that we are dealing with a very minute amount of carbon and an even smaller amount of C-14 (less than one trillionth of the carbon examined) and that this method of dating assumes that the ratio of C-14 to carbon in the atmosphere has always been constant throughout human history. Since the antediluvian world was probably surrounded by an atmosphere with more water vapor in it than the present world, this may have had an affect upon this ratio. What happened in the floor was cataclysmic, and what set the flood off is unknown. Is it possible that a higher concentration of radioactive carbon was introduced into the earth's atmosphere during these cataclysmic events? I have previously suggested that the earth was struck by meteors or asteroids, which both set off the 40 days of rain and tilted the earth. Although I came up with these thoughts independently, others have hypothesized similar events which set off the great flood of Noah. Such a series of events could have changed the C-14 concentration in the earth's atmosphere, throwing off all calculations which extend beyond 7000 years ago.

Furthermore, due to the very small amount of carbon that we examine, the time limits of this method, although touted as being accurate for 50,000 years, might not be accurate for even 10,000 years, assuming atmospheric constancy. Also, the interpretation of the results can be distorted. As Charlie Clough points out, when a piece of wood found in a tomb is tested using carbon dating methods, the age given is not the age of the tomb nor is it the age of the tree when it was put into the tomb but, rather, it is the age of the tree when it was cut down originally.

Potassium-argon dating depends upon the decay of potassium 40 into argon 40. This decay rate is much slower than that of C-14, and is used to date items which might be a million or more years old. Certain rock formations are dated this way. The assumption here is that when some rock formations of Africa show to be 1.5 million years old, then the tools and the bones of primitive man found in that vicinity are also 1.5 million years old. I hope that it is obvious that this does not indicate the true age of the artifacts or the bones found with the rock but, at best, dates only the rock itself.

I have mentioned these methods of dating for several reasons:

- To indicate that the methods of dating are not infallible

<sup>30</sup> *World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 16 ©1982

- To show you that they are the product of a certain number of assumptions which may or may not be erroneous

On the other hand, I do not wish to disparage the work of archaeologists or paleontologists. The Bible has been continually vindicated in several areas of archaeology and historical accuracy due to their discoveries. They have also been force-fed certain assumptions throughout their entire school life; and when you are told something long enough at an early enough age by people that you trust and admire, it is only natural to accept those premises.

Stratigraphy is the study of various strata of sites where man has lived. Due to man's predisposition toward evolution, it is thought that the stone age came first (which can be separated into different eras), then the Chalcolithic (copper/stone) period, the bronze age, etc. A period of man's history is assigned to these strata which are postulated to be in one of these categories and everything found in that strata are then dated by the strata in which they are found. When man is dated based upon the strata within which he is found, then we are at the mercy of the precepts upon which stratigraphy is founded. That is, a particular human fossil may be determined to be a million years old because the strata in which he is found is assumed to be a million years old. You see, carbon dating destroys portions of the items which are found in archaeological digs, so using this method conserves the organic matter which is found (which is very little in the Palestinian area).

The problem here is that anyone can go out today and find people who are living in one of these *ages*. There are people who are living in the stone age; people who function as hunters and gatherers who join in tribes. It has been a fact throughout human history that these various kinds of people have lived almost side-by-side since the dawn of man. It is true that many societies go through a period of growth and prosperity in which their culture becomes richer and more diversified during which we see a technological boom. In fact, in many countries today we see a tremendous boom in technology. However, it takes but a superficial examination of human history to see that the world has moved through ages of advance and decline, advance and decline. Man in Rome in the first four centuries AD was light years ahead of man in the dark ages, which occurred later.

Charles Clough, in his book *Dawn of the Kingdom, section III*, he gives a list of the technological advances made by early post-diluvian man (he took these from Arthur Custance, *Doorway Papers*). I will note a few of these under the same headings:

### Scientific Achievements of Ancient Man

Mechanical Principles and Applications: Gears, pulleys, lathes, fire pistons, gimbal suspension, suspension bridges, domes and arches, lock gates and lifts, steam engine principle, clockwork mechanism, etc.

Materials: Copper, bronze, iron, cast iron, steel, cement, dyes and inks, rubber, lenses of several types, glass (including possibly a malleable glass), china and porcelain, glues, preservatives, shellacs, varnishes, enamels, gold and silver work (including sheet, wire, and plating of metals), etc.

Building Techniques, Tools and Materials: Nails, saws, hammers, brace and bit, sandpaper, Carborundum, plans and maps, surveying instruments, central heating systems, window materials, including glass, protective coatings, street drainage systems, sewage drainage on a wide scale, running water in piped systems, piped gas for heating, drills (including diamond drills), buildings of all types (including genuine skyscrapers and earthquake-proof construction), etc.

Fabrics and Weaving: Cotton, silk, wool, linen, felt, lace, needles, gauze, mechanical looms, mending, tapestry, batik, thimbles, parchment, tailored clothing, feather and fur garments, knitted and crocheted materials, all types of thread, ropes up to 12 inches in diameter, paper of all kinds (including coated stocks), etc.

Food gathering Methods: The use of fish poisons and animal intoxicants, the use of tamed animals (dogs, cats and birds) to catch game, elephants for labor and land clearance, traps and nets of all kinds, and, in agriculture, the use of multi-culture, fertilizes and mechanical seeders and other equipment.

Writing, Painting, etc: Inks, chalks, pencils, crayons, block printing, literary forms, movable type, textbooks, encyclopedias, envelopes and postal stamps, libraries and catalogues, etc.

Medical and Surgical Practices and Instruments: Gargles, snuffs, inhalators, enemas, fumigators, suppositories, insecticides, truth serums, cocaine, anesthetics, soaps, splints, quinine, pills, lotions, ointments, plasters, bandages, tourniquet, adhesive tapes, surgical stitching, caesarian operations (although they were probably

## Scientific Achievements of Ancient Man

not called that at that time), animal stupifying drugs, vaccine for small pox, surgical instruments (knives, tweezers, forceps), identification of hundreds of common diseases and injuries including brain and eye operations and surgery in general), etc.

Certainly, ancient man lacked *Gameboy* and *WordPerfect*, but this partial list should indicate that these are not the grunting, semi-civilized, "let's go throw a rock at the head of an animal and see what happens" man which is too-often portrayed. One of the main reasons that the authorship of Moses is questioned by higher critics is that they do not like the idea of such civilized literary content coming from bronze age man. I reproduced this list to indicate that man has, even in ancient history, been extremely intelligent, very inventive, and that identifying the age of man by stratification, under the assumption that man has progressed over a long period of time from very primitive to highly civilized (I guess we are the ones who view ourselves as being highly civilized), is fraught with inaccurate presuppositions.

The entire list is found here:

[http://www.custance.org/Library/Volume1/Part\\_I/Chapter3.html](http://www.custance.org/Library/Volume1/Part_I/Chapter3.html)

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

An important note is that the years given in Gen. 5 are different in the Hebrew text (upon which our Bible is based), the Septuagint and in the Samaritan text. We do not know which text is more accurate in this area, although most scholars tend to go with the Hebrew text, as that is the original text. The numbers in the LXX indicate that Methuselah would have survived the flood and the numbers found in the Samaritan text would have Jared, Methuselah and Lamech outliving the flood. Obviously, this does not jive with the Genesis account of the flood where these men are not mentioned as survivors of the flood. It is possible that all the ages were changed systematically in order to make certain that no one outlived the flood. This, of course, causes us problems with the common interpretation of this passage. Therefore, I will list some other interpretations. However, I should point out that **only one** scribal error could throw off the chronology of Genesis 5 and if that occurred, then the ages of the others named in Genesis may have been changed to correlate with the error.

The two problems which current theologians have with the antediluvian period is the longevity of those named in this record and the overall dating of this record. Important archaeological evidence which has been cited is that human fossils which have been examined have been determined to be between 20 and 60 years old. Further, it is generally agreed upon between archaeologists that man is approximately a million years old. To the former, recall that we are dealing with bones and fossils which are 5-10,000 years old and that certain assumptions are made as to the aging process; my point being is that these bones may (1) only appear to be 20-60 years old or (2) these are not bones from the antediluvian period. When it comes to dating the antediluvian period (for which Biblical scholars will be hard-pressed to do with any great accuracy), we cannot rely upon what archaeology has done in the dating of mankind in general. They are forced into these positions by the assumptions under which they operate. We have superficially dealt with the methods of dating used by archaeologists and paleontologists and have shown that they are not necessarily infallible.

Whereas in other genealogies throughout Scripture, it is clear that some generations are skipped, in Gen. 5 it appears as though this is the one time where each and every father and son are named due to the unique construction of this chapter. The parent is listed; the age when his son is born is listed, the number of years afterward that he lived is listed, and then the total years that he lived is listed. Now, there are other sons and daughters born to these men and it is possible that the *son* listed is not their son but their grandson—the amount of time given allows for that as does the precedence of other genealogies. However, the meticulous manner in which this chapter is written seems to indicate that the author was particular about getting the ages correct. Furthermore, the verb found here is associated with fathering a child, not with simply being an antecedent.

Could the text have been corrupted? That is certainly a possibility. How about the longevity factor? It is my personal opinion (and this is not shared by many) that the remains of the antediluvian civilization have never been found because (1) they were completely (or nearly completely) destroyed and/or (2) we have never looked in the right place. I believe if any of it has been preserved (and I doubt that much has) it would be found at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Whereas we have seen many destructive floods in our lifetimes, I do not think that we have seen any flood even one-tenth the magnitude and strength of the Genesis flood. I do not believe that civilization began in Mesopotamia but even possibly on another continent which was destroyed in the Atlantic. Throughout the Old Testament, God would occasionally order the destruction of a particular group of people and would command the obliteration of every man, woman, child, and their cattle and possessions. If God would command Israel to execute such judgement, then it only stands to reason that a generation so corrupt as the antediluvian age should be similarly summarily obliterated when God is Himself exacting the judgment. When that continent was deluged, it sunk and caused havoc throughout the rest of the earth, including tidal waves hundreds of feet high, almost unimaginable. There were likely dramatic geological changes which occurred at this time.

The new civilization did begin in the Mesopotamian area. Archaeology has not found any ancient man who died being hundreds of years old because archaeology has never discovered any antediluvian men. Whether they could be found or whether they even exist, we have no idea.

However, it is probably important to note what other theologians are thinking with respect to the genealogy given in Gen. 5:

The (false) theories start out innocuous enough. It has been noticed that there are 10 generations from Adam to Noah and ten from Noah to Abraham. It is postulated that this is done for symmetry, brevity and easy memory. The Hebrew words for *sired* (or, *begat*) and for *son* or *daughter* are used with great latitude and immediate descendent is not always the meaning (I am not aware of this being true for the verb *sired*, *begat*, *became the father of*). Skipping a generation or two is common (and we are always referred to Matt. 1 as *proof*). All this is true; however, we do not show the skipping of four or five generations at every benchmark in Matthew. So even if a generation is skipped here or there, there is no implication that between each set of names we have several generations.

However, based upon those facts, we have a theory that Enosh lived 90 years and sires Kenan and then Enosh lives another 815 years, having other sons and daughters, and then dies at the age of 905, that Enosh, at age 90 had a son, Bob, and Bob had a son Bubba, and Bubba had a son Junior and Junior (quite a number of years later) had a son Kenan. If this is the case, then figures and statements made in Gen. 5 would be false, which would suggest that this is not the Word of God. The conclusion that not all generations are included in Gen. 5 and the time frame given is not what it seems, does not really solve any problems (the age of mankind; and the individual ages noted herein), and introduces the new problem that: the Bible is not the Word of God.

Because there are some instances where an individual's name is used for both himself and for his seed (Gen. 46:1-4), it is theorized that the list of antediluvian names represents tribes or families or dynasties and the number of years given stands for the length of time that dynasty survived (this does not account for the fact that the ages given are all very similar). Again, this really does not solve any problems, but only suggests that the Bible is not the Word of God.

### **Possibly include this with Gen. 6-8**

The remains of at least four major floods have been found in the Mesopotamian area and they have all been thought to be evidence of the Genesis deluge. At Ur, for instance, there were some excavations made in the 1920's under the direction of a man named Woolley, who discovered some incredible tombs which were a veritable treasure chest of golden drinking cups and goblets, a vases and jugs, bronze tableware, mother of pearl mosaics, and all other manner of artifacts. The lowest and last tombs were judged to be from 2800 B.C. Below that were charred wood ash and clay tablets with writing guessed to date back to 3000 B.C.; and below, there was more pottery and vases, all from the period of time of the tombs. Then right below that was a 10 foot band of clay, the



kind deposited by water, yet several yards above the river level. The clay abruptly stopped and below that they found more vases and pottery, which they judged to be possibly antediluvian. Woolley concluded that this was a flood which covered approximately 400 miles x 100 miles, just Northwest of the Persian Gulf. Although it would have been a local occurrence insofar as we would be concerned to day, it was thought to be world wide for the inhabitants of that area. We have also found traces of flooding in Mesopotamia, in Kish, Neneveh and Uruk. The problem is they all occurred at different times with possibly centuries separating them. A result of this is that very few Biblical scholars will point to any one of these and call it the Genesis flood. In fact, most authors that I have read, although they believe in the Genesis flood, they do not believe that there is any irrefutable evidence of such a flood. Believers should not be troubled by this. For centuries, the Bible was ridiculed because it gave great prominence to some insignificant group of peoples known as the Hittites. We have since found out, through the efforts of archaeology that the Hittites were ever bit the world power during their time as the Bible makes them out to be. With respect to the Genesis flood, it should be pointed out is that the Genesis flood possibly did not even occur in this area, although it certainly affected this area in terms of earthquakes, tidal waves and the dramatic shifting of the continents. Furthermore, although historical accuracy is an absolute must for God's Word, as we believe in the inerrancy of Scripture; even historical verification of every point in the Bible would not prove to anyone that Jesus Christ died on their behalf on the cross and that by believing in Him they would have eternal life. Even God the Father would not allow those at Gethsemane to view Jesus bearing our sins. He covered the land with a thick, supernatural darkness.

The Weld-Blundell Prism is a list of eight kings who ruled Sumer prior to the flood and fourteen dynasties which came after the flood. It has been assumed by many, hoping for corroborating evidence of the flood in extra-Biblical literature, that the flood here is the Genesis flood. Since there have been four major floods at least early in the history of man in the Mesopotamian area, that means that these kings do not have to be antediluvians and post-diluvians. If God wiped out the inhabitants of the earth, which the Bible clearly indicates, then it would be illogical for a tablet to list a group of kings which reigned before and after a flood. This indicates some sort of coherency in rulership and in population. We have faced incredible floods and have lost large groups of people; it is not inconceivable that mankind could have lost much larger groups of people in an ancient flood, yet the nation survived and some sort of rulership survived, consistent enough to manage to find both sets of kings, those before and after to end up on the same historical record.

One of the intriguing things about this Prism is that some of the names of the kings seem to mean the same thing in translation as some of the names in Genesis 5. The third patriarch named in Genesis is Enosh (which means *man*) and the third king on the Sumerian (or, Babylonian) list is Amelu, and it means *man*. Kenan is our #4 man on the Genesis list and his name comes from a word which means *to fabricate* and the fourth king is Ummanu, and his name means *artificer*. #7 man on the Genesis list, Enoch, is said to have walked with God and then he was not; the seventh king on the Babylonian list (Enmeduranel) was said to have been summoned by the gods Shamash and Ramman. The tenth king, just like Noah, is said to have survived a great flood. There are differences between the two lists to be sure. Further, the period of time during which the antediluvian kings on the Sumerian list reigned was a total of 240,000 years. That's a long time. Individuals reigned for anywhere from 18,000+ years to 36,000 years. None of this should be troubling. Just in case you have forgotten, Satan is the great counterfeiter. No matter what God has done, Satan has attempted to copy it.

Let's summarize this:

### Summing up the Longevity Digression

To sum up, what I have hoped to accomplish by this lengthy digression is to show:

- It is possible that most or all of the direct ancestors of Noah are given in Gen. 5
- It is very likely that the time frame given for the antediluvian period is reasonable and true; other than the error of a copyist, we have no reason to doubt the overall time frame of Gen. 1–5
- It is very likely that those men named in Gen. 5 really did live for almost an entire millennium.
- Most theories end up questioning the accuracy of the Word of God, not questioning any of the

## Summing up the Longevity Digression

scientific theories they hope agree with; and yet, never actually come to a point where they agree with existing scientific thought.

- Finally, there is no reason to hold to some date a million years ago for the actual beginnings of man on this earth. 5000 to 10,000 B.C. is a reasonable time frame for a Christian to believe

Science, over and over again, comes up with theories that people believe for many decades (or longer), and then these theories turn out to be wrong.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**And Methuselah lived 187 years and sired Lamech, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Methuselah's were 969 years, and he died. And Lamech loved 182 years and become the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one shall give us rest [or, comfort us] from our work and from the toil of our hands from the ground which the Lord has cursed."**  
[Gen. 5:25–29]

This line of Seth, the seed of the woman, hoped for someone to deliver them from this earth of sin. Most of those who were alive had spoken with Adam and had learned from Adam what the earth was like 1500 years previous. Life, for them, as it is now, was a struggle and hard work. They further faced a world of half-angelic, half-human creatures. Each generation hoped for Messiah, the seed of the woman, the one to give them rest from all their labors. *Noah* is Nôach (נֹחַ) [pronounced *NOH-ahkh*] and the word for rest is nachath (נַחַת) [pronounced *NAH-khahth*], which means *tranquility, quietness, rest*. Strong's #5183 BDB #629. The verb that Lamech uses here is nâcham (נָחַם) [pronounced *naw-KHAHM*], which means, *to comfort, to console, to have compassion, to show compassion*. Strong's #5162 BDB #636. Jesus said, "Come to me all of you who are weary and heavy-burdened, and I will rest you. Take My yoke upon you; and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls." [Matt. 11:28–29] Rotherham also points out that *Noah* could mean consolation.

V. 32 will mark the end of the *generations* until we come to Gen. 10:1, which deals with the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth. This indicates that the author of the narrative from Gen. 4:25-9:32 was probably the same person, very likely Noah or one of his sons. The generations of Adam are dispensed with quickly with very little history or information other than the fact that Enoch was raptured (which had to be mentioned as the amount of years each person lived was mentioned). However, this would have been written by someone who possibly knew some of these men in the past and had kept some sort of a record and wrote from that record. Since the author will record Noah's life in more detail, along with the general state of the earth, I would further assert that Noah was the author of this portion of God's Word. Again, believing that this is a record written down by someone closer to the facts than Moses in no way detracts from the inspiration of God's Word. As I have mentioned, even Luke pooled different resources from which to write his gospel. He did not sit down after forty days and forty nights of eating nuts and berries, praying in the desert, and then start writing from a semi-conscious, subliminal state. We are never told to go into some kind of a trance state and start taking dictation nor is any writer of Scripture. This is foolish and very un-Christian. Those who wrote Scripture give the impression of being very lucid and very conscious while recording Scripture (although some of it came from dreams and visions).

Furthermore, there is no indication that some author like Moses later took these several different sources and tried to weave them together. Each individual narrative seems to be quite cohesive and self contained. There does not seem to be various writing styles found within each narrative. The narratives have a beginning and a logical end. They do not repeat word for word what previous or later narratives say, yet some of the material overlaps. In other words, this is not too different from the gospels, where there are portions which are found in almost all the gospels and information which only one gospel holds. The chart below is the result of educated guesswork; it is by no means to be taken as truth etched in stone:

### The Possible Authors of Sections of Genesis

Text	History Covered	Possible Author(s)	Rationale
Gen. 1:1–2:3	Creation of the earth and the universe; the six days of restoration; the seventh day of rest	God dictated this to Adam, Noah, Abraham or Moses	No person was alive to witness this, therefore it had to be dictated. It is reasonable to assume that another writer of Scripture was the instrument of God's dictation.
Gen. 2:4-3:24	The creation of the man and the woman, the fall of man, the pronouncement of judgement upon them and the serpent;	Adam.	This is too difficult to call with any accuracy. The history which has been covered is vast and covers information known primarily to Adam, Eve, Cain and to Lamech.
Gen. 4:1–4:15	The birth of Cain and Abel; the murder of Abel.	Adam, Cain or Seth.	Adam would have found out about this, possibly from God. Cain would have known about all of it. Particular striking is the conversation between God and Cain.
Gen. 4:16–24	The generations of Cain to the sons of Lamech.	Cain; one of La-mech's wives or children, Enoch, Shem or Noah.	The earth at this time would have been a "small town", and information would be gathered through the grapevine. Furthermore, Lamech's song was possibly known far and wide. Furthermore, man lived for centuries, so that his life spanned 10 generations.
Gen. 5:1–32	The genealogy of Adam to Noah.	Noah or Shem.	Every individual at this time could probably know his genealogical line in greater specificity than is recorded here. Just as we learn our names as very young children, they would be taught their genealogies in the same way.
Gen. 6:1–9:29	The corruption of mankind, the flood, and the beginning of the post-diluvian civilization.	Noah or Shem	The author was aware of the previous generations but does not record much information about them. The author spends the greatest amount of time dealing with the life of Noah. This indicates to me that this is the work of Noah.

## The Possible Authors of Sections of Genesis

Text	History Covered	Possible Author(s)	Rationale
Bear in mind that I have suggested that man's memory was much greater around the time of the flood, so that hundreds or thousands of men could have been aware of all of these incidents up to the flood. Even after the flood, large numbers of men could have known this information, many of them knowing the narrative of the flood <i>exactly</i> as we read it in the Bible.			
Gen. 10:1-32			
Gen. 11:1-0			
Gen. 11:10-24:67			

At this point, we are far ahead of where we need to be.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**Then Lamech lived 595 years after he became the father of Noah, and he had sons and daughters. So all the days of Lamech were 777 years and he died. And Noah was 500 years old, and Noah sired Shem, Ham and Japheth.** [Gen. 5:30–32]

*Shem* means *celebrity*, *Ham* means *swarthy or hot*, and *Japheth* means *extension*. These are not necessarily Noah's only children, but these are the only ones which are mentioned in Scripture. If Noah had other children, then they perished in the flood, having been contaminated by the demons of Gen. (to be covered in more detail in that chapter. Writing about other sons and daughters would have been no doubt very painful for Noah.

Some people are confused about the genealogical records and their purpose. The primary purpose of these records is to record the line of the humanity and the legal line of our Lord, which do not diverge until after King David. They trace, throughout several centuries, the seed of the woman. At this time, it was obvious that at least Adam and Lamech had sons which they thought were the promised seed. Furthermore, we are in a time of great corruption on the earth, which will be covered in chapter 6.

The New Testament makes several allusions to Noah and the flood and these references would be a good way to preface chapter 6. In Matt. 24, Jesus is telling of the signs of His return. When He returns, man will be preoccupied with his life on earth and little thought will be given to spiritual things. Noah, after having his three sons, will evangelize the earth for 120 years and the sum total of his converts will be his wife, three of his children and their wives. He would not be written up in *Evangelism Monthly*. Man and partial man will be too caught up in their own affairs to pay any attention to Noah. Our Lord said, "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah: for as in those days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. Further, they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. We have two pictures of the time prior to the flood and the time prior to the coming of the Son of Man. One picture is that of great violence and destruction (Gen. 6:11–13 and Matt. 24:6–7, 21–22) and the other is a picture of a total lack of interest in things spiritual, or daily life being carried on without a thought to God or to the eternal consequences of one's actions (see also Luke 17:26–30). There is no contradiction in these pictures; merely a difference in emphasis. Today, you can go to any place on earth and find great violence and you can find people totally preoccupied with their own lives. Prior to the flood and prior to our Lord's second advent, this will also be true, except that the violence will become intensified.

Our Lord spoke of Noah as an historical person and the flood as an historical event. There seems to be no indication that this was some kind of a folk tale carried down through the ages. Further, Noah finds himself in several genealogies (see 1Chron. 1:4 and Luke 3:36).

Hebrews take a wide view of spiritual history, covering the faith of Abel, Enoch and Noah, as well as baker's dozen of historical Jewish figures. Concerning Noah, it reads: **By faith-doctrine, Noah, having been warned about things not yet seen, in reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of is household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to fait.**

Peter, who became quite a Biblical scholar in his later years, mentions Noah once in each epistle. However, Peter, in each case, is not focusing upon Noah as much as he is focusing upon the angels *who sinned*. So I will save his quotes for the beginning of chapter 6 when we examine the actual makeup of the earth in the days of Noah.

Just recently, I have read that the continuous history of Israel certainly could not have been written by just one person (or two or three), so those who were the human authors of God's Word would always tie together their portion of the Bible with the previous section with a couple of verses. They might perhaps add a verse or two or a chapter to the previous book (for instance, Joshua likely wrote about the death of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy) and then in their portion of Scripture, they might repeat in the first few verses of their portion one or two verses from the previous book of Scripture. In this way they establish an end, a beginning and continuity. Chapter 1 of Joshua contains primarily a direct quote from God spoken to Joshua and in this quote, there are several quotations of what was in the writings of Moses. The Mosaic (and Abrahamic and Palestinian) covenant is repeated briefly in Josh. 1:2–4. God's promise repeated to Israel several times under Israel: "I will never fail you or forsake you" is found in Josh. 1:5. The Law of Moses, a reference to the five books of Moses, is recognized immediately as Scripture in Josh. 1:8. Then we begin with a history of Joshua, written in the third person as did most, but not all, writers of Scripture did.

We find a very similar pattern in the book of Genesis. In the chart which is found previously in this chapter, I have noted certain portions of Scripture and have given reasonable, educated guesses as to the authors of these sections. What we are studying here is very likely the work of Noah. A short addendum is added to chapter 4 of Genesis (vv. 25–26); the portion which is begun is given a title of sorts in Gen. 5:1 (this is not always the case); a portion of the previous book is repeated almost word for word (Gen. 5:1b–2a quotes Gen. 1:27–28a); this author notes the genealogical link in Gen. 5:1–32 (not always the case); and then the author launches into the text of his portion of God's Word. As for myself, I would bet money that—since the genealogy covers the seed of the woman throughout the entire antediluvian period, from Adam and the woman to Noah and his sons, and since the bulk of the following text deals exclusively with the events of Noah's life, which spanned the end of the antediluvian period and the beginning of the post-diluvian civilization— that Noah is the author of this portion of Scripture. I would be even more inclined to say that Moses did not necessarily even examine the documents and write the history of man, but copied it line for line in the book which became Genesis or merely added to it.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

# Genesis 6

**Genesis 6** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 6:1–22

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

v. 13      [Robert Dean on Why the Noahic Flood was Worldwide](#)

**Introduction:** There are those who are good, Christian men and women, who believe that the flood came just because man got way too sinful. This is not altogether logical, however. Man, in various portions of the world, has become extremely degenerate and Godless, yet God does not wipe out the earth. Certainly, in Gen. 9, God promises Noah that He will never again destroy the population of the earth as a whole by a flood; but how could things get so bad so soon after the fall, making such drastic action necessary? We are not speaking of a man who miscalculated or perhaps overreacted and destroyed mankind from the face of the earth; we are speaking of God the Father who has all of the facts, has a perfect knowledge of the past, present and future; and Who does not miscalculate or overreact. Logically, this would indicate that something occurred during this period of time which was evil enough or unusual enough to warrant more than just strong discipline but absolute destruction.

Our lives are but a drop in human history. Man is arrogant to believe that as it has been in his life, it always has been and forever will be. Eccles. 1:9 [What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun](#) (ESV). Eccles. 3:15 [That which is has been long ago, and that which is to be has been long ago: and God seeks again that which is passed away](#) (WEB). The first few chapters of Genesis introduce us to a world which is much different from our own and people who are much different from us today and circumstances which are far stranger than we can imagine.

God has sentenced Satan and the angels that fell to the Lake of Fire. Certainly, Satan objected to this sentence and brought forth many reasons why this sentence was unjust or too harsh. Human history reveals the absolute catastrophe of God allowing the coexistence of sin. However, so that there is no later objection that God stacked the deck, human history occurs in a number of environments, in a number of scenarios. We have man in innocence in perfect environment in the garden; but we also have fallen man in perfect environment in the millennium. We have man faced with signs and miracles and prophecy and we have a period of time where there are a dearth of signs and miracles and no prophecy. Throughout these various epochs of history, we also have a change in the relationship of the angels and demons to man. Whereas, angels have often been involved in our history as servants of God for our benefit and protection, the demonic role in history has changed. In the garden, Satan was allowed to indwell a serpent (or possibly even cohabit with a serpent, producing the serpent that lied to the woman). In the period of time when our Lord came to this earth, demon-possession was fairly common and almost universally acknowledged. That is, it appeared that in almost every town there were cases of demon-possession. Furthermore, this demon-possession resulted in very radical behavior. Today, there are likely many cases of demon-possession, but, for the most part, the behavior is less radical and more civilized. The multiple personality syndrom could be partially attributable to demon activity. This does not mean that all multiple personality types are demon-possessed; but it is likely that some are. In a similar vein, it is likely that some mass-murderers, with their sexual deviance and aberrant behavior beyond the murder of strangers, are demon-possessed. It is not beyond the field of logic to imagine that some world leaders, notably Stalin and Hitler, were demon-possessed, given the huge number of people whom they callously had killed. Demon-possession does not have to result in behavior which is clearly bizarre. Demons are far more intelligent than we are and their social skills would be close to perfect, if they so chose to act. This is why some mass-murderers can find so many victims and seem so normal to their victims to the point of actually seducing them to a point.

The purpose of all this introduction is to make you understand that after the fall, things could have been different than they are now in more respects than we realize. Demon activity could have been different than it is now. It is my opinion that (1) demons actually were allowed to have their own bodies and were able to copulate with mankind and produce offspring; (2) these offspring were half-demon and half-human, a counterfeit of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ; and (3) that mythology is based upon this period of time. When Satan seduced Adam and the woman to fall, mankind and the earth underwent some dramatic changes. Had Satan not the ability to intervene in human history, he could have objected that even though he caused man to fall, he could have straightened out the earth, given the opportunity. Therefore, Satan and his demon army have always played a part in human history in one way or another. We always think of Satan as a force for sin, but he also operates in the field of good and evil. Man's many attempts for a human utopia are not continually thwarted by Satan, but a result of Satan's attempts to show that he can run the world and the world system. He is the ruler of the earth and he is in charge. The fact that there are wars, poverty, sickness, and all types of evils on this earth are not necessarily the result of Satan's direct action but a result of his ineptitude to provide a suitable environment for the inhabitants of the earth. There is a marvelous quote from Chafer which Thieme was wont to use at this point which I cannot find in my abridged *Systematic Theology*.

Communism and socialism are great political systems which are related to Satanic philosophy. There is an attempt to make everyone equal, and to remove those who are so foolish as to believe in God (they are removed from society, reeducated, or simply killed). You cannot suddenly impose a socialistic system without killing millions of people. However, you can slowly inundate society with socialistic trends and socialistic philosophy, which has happened in most of Europe, Canada and currently in the United States.

Back to Genesis 6: there are a great many good Christians who do not believe that angels ever were allowed to copulate with mankind, and, as J. Vernon McGee used to say, on this one point we can allow them to be wrong. We can still fellowship with them and spend eternity with them. However, since Satan took over the rulership of the earth, it is only logical to allow him a certain amount of autonomy in ruling it. Furthermore, the angels came from a lifestyle of celibacy. They did not procreate; there were not male and female angels; they do not marry or give in marriage. What occurred on the earth with the woman was a new thing. Satan's plan was to corrupt all mankind by having angels fornicate with women. This viewpoint must be substantiated and it will be shown that every reference to angelic activity during Noah's time will indicate that more than demon-possession took place.

There is a second reason that angels cohabited with mankind (I should say womankind); fallen angels are destined for the Lake of Fire. They will spend eternity there in suffering and in separation from God. The harshness of God's sentencing is explained in human history. God has allowed the redeeming of fallen man, but not of fallen angels. So, why can't God just allow Satan some little corner of the universe to hang, separated from all else? First of all, God will give Satan that little corner of the universe; we call it hell, but it is properly the Lake of Fire. Secondly, Satan and his angels are doing everything possible to see that we do not choose Jesus Christ, but that we spend our eternity with him instead. However, I am deviating from the point I would like to make. Mankind can be redeemed and angels cannot. So what is God going to do when He is faced with some half-man, half-angelic beings? Won't God have to save them if they choose to believe in Jesus Christ? And God had Moses preach the gospel for 120 years, with the only converts coming from his own family, who were uncontaminated flesh. Therefore, that remains a moot question.

The first term which we must examine is *sons of God* found here and in Job 1:6 2:1 and 38:7. Both Hebrew words are the common words for *sons* and for *God*. However, they are only used in conjunction in these four portions of OT Scripture. In Job, it is fairly clear that we are dealing with a convocation of angels, both fallen and elect, and Satan in the courtroom of God. This is why it is that *sons of God* in Genesis refers to angels. The use of *Son of God* in the New Testament is used only of Jesus Christ in His incarnation and *sons of God* in the New Testament refer to us as believers in union with Jesus Christ.

The New Testament has more to say on the subject of the times of Noah, however. In the little book of *Jude*, the writer is making a point by quoting several parallel judgements found in the Old Testament. In fact, the time period covered is the same as that in Genesis and Exodus (Jude mentions Cain, Enoch, Moses, Sodom and Gomorrah and the Exodus generation). In the midst of these things, Jude writes: **And angels who did not keep their own**

domain, but abandoned their proper abode, [those] He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6) These are the angels who left their celibate state and cohabited with the daughters of men; the same were buried under the raging waters of the flood and held in bonds under darkness until the day of judgment. Even Jesus Christ, in his Spirit, immediately following his death by crucifixion, carried a victorious proclamation to these angels. In which [Spirit] He also went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison who once were disobedient (or unyielding) when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. (1Peter 3:19–20) This was not Peter's last word on this subject: For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them in pits of darkness, reserved for judgment, and did not spare the ancient [antediluvian] world, but preserved Noah, a proclaimer of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. (2Peter 2:4–5)

So it is clear that something occurred with some angels during the time of Noah, causing them to be put under chains of darkness, reserving them for later judgement and this transgression involved leaving their own principality or position. Our most logical conclusion is that they cohabited with the daughters of men. Remember, that women were a brand new thing on the earth. No such creature had ever existed before like this. And it is logical to have one period of time where angels could directly intervene upon human history, to reveal that they do not have the ability to correct the fallen state of man, which was caused by Satan.

The last, and weakest witness to this viewpoint is the history of man. If something like this occurred, even though the post-diluvian civilization began with believers only, the sons of Noah would certainly remember the incredible half-human half-angelic creatures that lived upon the earth and they would, tell about these beings. Stories about half man, half-god beings would certainly find its way to almost every major ancient culture. This is precisely what we find. Mythology exists for the Celts, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Scandinavians and Hindus (among others). There are a great many parallels between these various myths. They had the same source material; each culture just embellished these myths. See the [Mythology Table \(PDF version\)](#). It is not unlike a rumor which has gotten out of control. In the myths which I have examined, there is parallel after parallel between God's Word and these myths, from the creation of the earth and the creation of man to the tribulation and the millennium. Recall that Satan is the great counterfeiter and he will counterfeit the truth and, whenever possible, glorify himself in the process. Most of these mythologies have a trinity of sorts; they all have Satanic figures (and usually many Satanic figures); there is a lot of marriage between brothers and sisters and nephews, and other close relatives, similar to the antediluvian civilization. There is cohabitation between gods and men and there are races of half-mortal/half-gods in these myths. The parallels between the truth and myth are amazing. As I read through various myths and synopses of various mythologies, I am amazed by the clear bastardization of the truth which is found in everything from the creation myths, to the underworld, to the chains of darkness, to even the end times.

Now with this several page introduction to chapter 6 of Genesis, we are finally able to begin and have some idea as to what is really occurring:

**Now it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth that daughters were born to them, and the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives to themselves, whomever they chose. [Gen. 6:1–2]**

The angels are called sons of God because God created them; they do not procreate or give birth. They do not have a male or female sex. As Jesus said, "The angels do not marry nor are they given in marriage." However, man does procreate and they began to have daughters as well as sons. Women are often impressed by foolish things, such as power, exterior beauty, fame and riches, and these fallen angels had all of these attributes, making them far more desirable than puny man. Therefore, the angels were able to chose as they so desired. God allowed this for a time to illustrate that angelic infiltration of the human race was not the answer and that Satan could not solve the problems of the fallen world in this way. This also indicates that God created the woman as a creature of great beauty, which we still see today. Only a man with real character can see beyond this tremendous exterior beauty.



We have seen the Hebrew word for *take* before; it can mean *to take in marriage* and this is what it means in this context. It is in the Qal imperfect, which means they continued to take these women as wives, that it did not all occur at once but a few of them tried it and made it work so other fallen angels decided to join in. *Chose* is in the Qal perfect; they made the initial choice, stuck with it, and then took these women as wives. Their choice is in the perfect tense, because it was a completed action with results that continued.

**The Yahweh said, "My Spirit shall not plead [the cause] [or, strive] with man forever; because he also [is] flesh, therefore his days shall be 120 years." [Gen. 6:3]**

This verse has a couple of slightly different renderings, mostly because the translators do not know what is going on in this passage, therefore the actual translation does not make sense to them. The first verb in the quote is *dîyn* (דִּיַן) [pronounced *deen*]; and it can mean *to judge, to exercise judgement, to punish* and it can mean *plead (the cause) or to strive*. The latter translation is found in Gen. 30:6 Jer. 5:28 30:13. Then there is the elusive<sup>31</sup> preposition *shel* (שֶׁל) [pronounced *shehl*], and it means *on account of, because, whatsoever, whichever*. *Man* is in the singular masculine meaning that it stands for mankind; and is followed by the relative pronoun in the singular masculine. *Gam* (גַּם) [pronounced *gam*] is an adverb denoting addition and it can be translated *also, moreover, yea or even*.

God will continue to witness to mankind below, even though most of man is half-angel, half-man at this point; but God will still plead the gospel with them, because man is **also** flesh. God has also given man a cutoff time. For 120 years, Noah will proclaim the gospel to the masses for 120 years, regardless of their origins, and he will have but seven converts, his wife, his three sons and his three daughters-in-law, (who wisely chose to marry into Noah's family). An additional purpose for the line of Noah is now more obvious: this line shows that Noah was descended from 100% homo sapiens. There were no angels in the woodpile for Noah. Noah's father and grandfather both died prior to the flood and the means of their death is not told to us.

There are certainly other theories on what this means. The most common theory is that the two lines represent the line of Seth and the line of Cain intermarrying; another is that the sons of God refer to kings who could choose whatever women they wanted because they were kings. It is true that Israel often became corrupt due to intermarriage with people of other religions but this is not Israel that we are speaking of here. God has said nothing about who can marry who. Furthermore, whether we have the line of Cain mixed with the line of Seth (who have the same father), does that require God to wipe them off the face of the earth with a flood? Can Cain's line really be that bad? Further, it is possible that there were *kings* at that time, but we must remember that we are less than a dozen generations from Adam and Eve. They have certainly populated the earth quickly, as lifetimes tended toward the millennial mark and cities began to be built, but this does not mean that man has banded into separate nations as of yet (or city-states). God seems to encourage this type of separation later in Gen. 9. The point is, these theories come very short of dealing with the passage in context, with the quotations from Jude and Peter, and when it comes to dealing with Noah being *perfect* and all flesh being *corrupt*, these theories will also prove to be inadequate.

**The Nephilim were in the earth in those days and also after that [or, as a result of this], when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and bore [sons] to them; the same were the heroes of old, the men of renown. [Gen. 6:4]**

Again, examine the other two, incorrect theories of the mixture of the two lines (whether kings and women or Cain's line and Seth's line); if these are men of renown, heroes of the past, why do we not know anything about them today? However, if they are a mixture of angels and man, then almost every ancient culture knows about these men and this information has been brought down to us even to today. A mixture of Seth's line and Cain's line is not going to account for men who are looked back upon as heroes or as men of renown. Properly interpreted, God's Word makes perfect sense at this point. Being that we are in an age where miracles and signs and wonders are rare, people tend to want to remove any hint of supernatural from the Bible. Critics for centuries have tried to discount the miracles of Moses, Elijah and Jesus Christ, claiming that these are but myths. Some

<sup>31</sup> I say *elusive* because it was so difficult to find in *Brown-Driver-Briggs*.

fundamentalists get caught in the same trap and more subtly persuaded that since there is no cohabitation between women and angels today, that it therefore never took place before. There are a lot of things in the antediluvian state which is different from our present age. This allowance by God is but one of many drastic dissimilarities between our age and that age.

Most translators, at this point, puppy out and transliterate instead of translate the first noun. The KJV uses the word *giants*, but that is not necessarily correct. The word is N<sup>e</sup>phîlîym (נִפְלִיִּים) [pronounced *n<sup>e</sup>f-eeI-EEM*] (the *-im* suffix is the plural suffix in the Hebrew). It's meaning is disputed, which is why it is often transliterated. It is found only elsewhere in Num. 13:33 where a patrol sent out by Moses to the land of Canaan comes back, one of them, Caleb, desiring to overtake the peoples in the land, the majority report was afraid to attack because the people were nephilim and the Jews, by comparison, were grasshoppers in their sight. It is for this reason, the word is sometimes translated *giants*. Another possible meaning is *fallen ones*. The root word for this is nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*] which means to *fall*; or nêphel (נֶפֶל) [pronounced *NEH-feI*] which means *untimely birth* or *abortion* (it is the same root word). This can be a technical term for these half-angel/half-human beings. They are related to an untimely birth; they are probably larger in stature and much stronger than the Jews; they are fallen creatures. The use in Num. 13:33 could have been an exaggeration based upon this passage. The spies in those circumstances were so nervous and afraid, that they saw these people as not the mythological people of old but similar to these gods. That is, the word was used to incite fear among the Jews (which it did).

The sentence structure is such that we cannot determine whether these are beings in addition to those mentioned in the verse or whether these are the product of this unholy union of the sons of God and the daughters of men. However, it would be logical that these refer to the fallen angels who copulated with the homo sapiens females.

**Then Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only [or, altogether] evil continually. [Gen. 6:5]**

*Wickedness* includes *bad, unkind, vicious, disagreeable* and *displeasing*. Furthermore, *wickedness* and *evil* are the same words in the Hebrew in this verse. Again, how is it likely that man, left to his own devices, could reach a state of evil this great? Man, throughout history, has always had pockets of evil. But the only difference here, by many expositors, is that man was able to pick and chose the women that he wanted and he lived a lot longer than man today. This is not going to account for this concentration of evil. Again, the only logical explanation for what is going on is that God has allowed the angels to cohabit with women.

**And Yahweh was sorry that He had made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart. [Gen. 6:6]**

Translators and expositors have had a lot of trouble with this verse. Sometimes it is even translated improperly as *it repented the Lord that...* This way God would not be the subject of the sentence. It is not a problem to have a verse like this. It is simply an anthropopathism. This expresses God's motivation and response to a situation in human terms; ascribing to God emotions and feelings which He does not have, yet better explaining God to man through the use of these emotions. God knew in eternity past exactly what was going to happen. The events of the past three chapters did not catch God by surprise and now He wishes He would have thought this out a bit better. At this point in time, one-third of the angels had fallen and man had fallen. However, it was through this, and through the rest of human history that God would preserve the rest of the angels forever and preserve man forever, those who so choose.

**And the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." [Gen. 6:7]**

It is worthwhile to note that God is a trinity and is speaking amongst Himself and speaking aloud so that (1) the angels may hear Him and learn and (2) that man might have a recording of what God thought in our historical past prior to the flood. What God plans to do to the man who is on the earth is mâchâh (מַחֲחֵ) [pronounced *maw-*

**KHAWH**] and its proper meaning is *to stroke or rub*, its derived meanings is *to blot out, to erase, to rub out, to obliterate*. It is always used in the latter sense and not in the former.

**But Noah discovered grace in the eyes of Yahweh.** [Gen. 6:8]

Because it would be nice to see the Hebrew word for grace, it is *chên* (חַן) [pronounced *khayn*]. It means *graciousness, kindness, favor, elegance*. This particular phrase, *discovering grace in the eyes of Yahweh*, is found throughout the Old Testament. Genesis, being the book where all great doctrines have their origin, introduces grace for the first time. The definition of grace by R. B. Thieme, Jr., *all that God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross* is much preferable to the more common *unmerited favor*.<sup>32</sup> Grace is a true doctrine for every dispensation, as we all receive far more than we could ever deserve, it is not found in the Old Testament as often as it is in the New. We are given the Holy Spirit in the age of grace, the church age, as believers in Jesus Christ, whereas, in the Old Testament, only a very small percentage of believers, one-tenth of one percent, received the Holy Spirit (which could then be withdrawn). In fact, many believers in the Old Testament did not even realize that such a thing as the Holy Spirit existed. Those who had it and those who knew some doctrine realized that God did give to some a Helper; but because the cross was presented in shadow form, the full revelation of God's plan had not been given. The life of the believer in the Old Testament was on more of a legal basis. There was grace because Israel was given certain covenants that would stand forever and would be fulfilled no matter what. On the other hand, of the Law, God told Israel, "Do this and live." Man by his effort, was to attempt to keep the law and if he did not, he was to avail himself of the grace of God through animal sacrifices to cover his sin. Why are we the privileged dispensation? As I have mentioned, man is teaching the angels in human history, as well as resolving the angelic conflict. Every stated objection and unstated objection of Satan is being answered. We have seen man under perfect environment, under long life and intermingling with the demon army of Satan, and we will see man in several dispensations without the fully guidance of the Holy Spirit (which will show that we cannot live a spiritual life—a life pleasing to God—apart from the Holy Spirit). Although it is not stated, I would think that God had given Noah, and very likely his entire family, the Holy Spirit. This is implied by v. 3; God's Spirit would not always strive with man. Is the Spirit some ethereal essence for good? Certainly not; the Holy Spirit usually, but not always, functions through someone. That someone is at least Noah, and possibly some or all of the members of his family.

What occurs next is difficult to explain in terms of authorship. It seems very likely that Noah wrote Gen. 5–10, but the next few verses seem to indicate that a new author has logged on. We have the famous phrase, *these are the beginnings (or the generations) of Noah*, v. 10 ties us to the previous increment of Scripture, but that generally indicates a new author. At first, I would guess that Lamech, Noah's father, wrote Gen. 4:25–6:8 (or, Gen. 5:1–6:8), because he lived long enough to see the sons of Abraham being born and lived to see the corruption of the earth. Furthermore, a great spiritual man needs to have been taught from someone. The only logical place for Noah to have matured spiritually is under the tutelage of his father, who learned from his father. This would indicate that Lamech, although little is said about him, was also spiritually mature. However, he is not likely the author as his death is recorded. Because of the personal conversations recorded in Gen. 6, it is more likely that Noah wrote the latter portion than the former, so my educated guess would be that chapter 4 and the first part of 5 were written by Noah before the flood and that he carried the manuscripts with him on the ark (or carried onto the ark in his mind, as I think antediluvian people were much smarter than man today). This portion of Scripture was probably written by Noah after the flood.

**These are the Generations [or, the Progeny] of Noah: Noah was a righteous [or, justified] man; he was blameless [innocent, unimpaired, uncorrupted] in his time period [or, generation]; with God, Noah walked.** [Gen 6:9]

Many Bibles use the word *generation* twice in this verse, but there are two different Hebrew words (the ESV reads: *These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.*). The first one is the one used several times previous, transliterated from the Greek *genesis*. It might be

<sup>32</sup> And, for all I know, this could have come originally from L. S. Chafer. In any case, Bob repeated this so often in class, that it stuck with me without having to look it up anywhere.

more literally translated *begettings*. It is similar to the words for *born, kindred, offspring*. The second word often translated *generation* is *dōwr* (דֹּוֹר) [pronounced *dohr*] and it has a variety of meanings. It is quite similar to our understanding of the word *dispensation* or *age*. It is properly a *revolution of time*, which is why it can be translated as *age* or *dispensation*. It can also mean *dwelling place*. It also means *circle* or *ball*.

In this verse we have the first use of the word *righteous* in the Bible (or, *just, justified, vindicated*). It is the word *tsaddīyq* (צַדִּיק) [pronounced *tsahd-DEEK*]. It is used of both man and God and is quite similar to our use of it in the New Testament. However, we have righteousness because we share Christ's righteousness. We are in Christ. We do not know how much that man knew about what was right and what was not during this period of time. The revelation which has come down to us says very little about the moral codes, other than that when Cain murdered his brother, God protected him because it had not been revealed yet that murder was a sin against God. However, for as much as was revealed at that time as being righteous, Noah was this.

Then we find the word that the KJV translated *perfect*, which caused problems theologically speaking for many. We all know that *all of sinned and come short of the glory of God* so people have trouble with this word *perfect*. The word is *tāmīym* (תָּמִיִּם) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*] and it means to be *without blemish, to have integrity, being complete, wholesome, innocent, unimpaired*. His character has already been alluded to in this verse. In another context, with another verb, this would refer to spiritual maturity. However, the verb used here is in the perfect tense; it is a completed action viewed as a whole. What this is, is an unchangeable fact. Therefore, this refers to the fact that Noah is 100% homo sapiens without any mixture of demonic *blood*. This is the word used for sacrificial animals who have no external blemishes or imperfections. When used of Noah, it meant that his parents were Homo sapiens, as were theirs. This is important enough to record the generations prior to this portion of God's Word.

*Walking* refers to a lifestyle or to a way of life. We can be justified in the past with results which continue on forever. However, our lives can be an ungodly mess. That is, the vindication that we possess is not seen by anyone else, often not even ourselves. However, this walk is the day-in, day-out experience of the mature believer who recognizes his salvation and exploits his relationship with God to the maximum. Therefore, in this verse, we have three words which describe Noah and they are not synonymous. He was saved, justified or vindicated; he had not been corrupted; and his walk with God indicated an ongoing maturity.

### **And Noah sired three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.** [Gen. 6:10]

*Sired* is in the Hiphil imperfect; Noah caused these sons to come into being. They were not all sired at once; hence, the imperfect tense. This verse is almost a direct quote from Gen. 5:32b, which ties this portion of Scripture to what has gone before. It is as though there was a scroll which was written upon; and the author would stop and then he (or another person) would pick up from there in the future. He might write a preface, introduce the subject matter with a title, and then tie it to what has gone before with a verse or two. Here, because it is likely Noah doing the writing (and my guess is that he is writing this after the flood), that he does not quote much from his previous manuscript.

### **Now the earth became corrupt in the sight of God; therefore the earth was filled with violence [or, noisy, wild ruthlessness].** [Gen. 6:11]

*Shâchath* (שָׁחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*] means *to decay, to ruin, to become corrupt, marred or spoiled*. In the Niphal imperfect, it means that the earth was caused to become corrupt (it is in the passive voice) and it was a process. *In the sight of God* means that the earth may have seemed fine to those fallen angels who corrupted it and they were enjoying their party on earth; but from a divine perspective, the earth had entered into ruin and corruption.

*Filled* is also in the Niphal imperfect. *Violence* is the word *châmâç* (חָמָץ) [pronounced *khaw-MAWS*] and it refers to physical violence, but also to wrong in the sense of injurious and vicious language, harsh treatment, and noisy, wild ruthlessness. This is a surprisingly contemporary word, brought into the English language as *Hamas*.

The angels took the daughters of man without any thought to the men on earth; without a single thought to their needs, to their right man/right woman relationship that they have destroyed. These angels were nothing more than powerful bullies who had their way no matter what the consequences.

**And God looked on the earth and behold it had (been caused to) become corrupt; for all flesh corrupted their way upon the earth. [Gen. 6:12]**

The first use of corrupt (the same word as in the previous verse) is in the Niphal perfect. God views the action as a whole and the earth (or the land) does not cause its own corruption; it is passive. It became (or was caused to come) corrupt. The second use of *corrupt* is in the Hiphil perfect where the object of the verb takes a part in the action of the verb. *Flesh* both was acted upon and acted out of volition to bring upon this corruption. This again describes exactly what occurred. The daughters of men in most cases allowed themselves to be swept away by the romanticism and the power of the fallen angels. However, also, the volition of the fallen angels caused the corruption of the earth; so we have a joint subject, although the fallen angels are not named specifically. However, this is brought out by the use of the Hiphil stem. Notice that *all* flesh had become corrupted. This means that virtually the entire population of the earth, with the exception of a few of those in Seth's line, had become part man and part fallen angel.

**Then God said to Noah, "A coming of an end of all flesh before Me [or, in My presence]; for the earth is filled with violence because of their presence; and take a sobering look to Me [literally, behold Me]; the ruination of them with the earth." [Gen. 6:13]**

Qêts (קֵץ) [pronounced *kayts*] refers to *an end or cessation*. There is no definite article. *All flesh* is the same two words in the same construction as in the previous verse; *all* is a substantive and this might be more correctly translated *the totality of flesh*. Then we have the Qal active participle of *bôw'* (בָּוֹ) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to go, to come, to come in, to come upon or to fall upon (as an enemy), to come to pass*. This is followed by a preposition and the masculine plural noun (with a first person singular suffix) of *pânîym* (פָּנַיִם) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*] and it has a variety of uses. It is found in the plural, but used as the singular, and it means *face*. Literally, what we have is: *the coming of the cessation of all flesh in my face*. However, *before me, in my presence, in front of me* would all be reasonable ways to translate this. *For the earth is filled with violence* is correct. The preposition is *from, out of, because of* and it is followed *paniym* again, but with a third masculine plural suffix this time. This should be translated *because of their presence*.

Hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*] with the first person singular suffix means *behold Me*. This, unfortunately, does not sound as we would like in modern English. *The New English Bible*, because of the awkward and out of date phrasing, does not even translate this word. *The New Revised Standard Version* follows suit. *Take note of this, or watch me* might be more up to date renderings, but they lose some of the force and vigor of *behold Me*. We then have a play on words, although it is not done in a playful way. The verb is the Hiphil participle of *shâchath* (שָׁחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which has been used several times in the previous verses to describe the corruption of the earth which has occurred. Man and man corrupted by angels has caused the corruption of the earth so God will now cause the further ruin of the earth. The Hiphil means the object of the verb, mankind or flesh, participates in the action of the verb. Through their corruption of flesh and of the earth, they have caused the further destruction of the earth. It is the law of volitional responsibility. God has shown that direct demonic involvement with the affairs of man causes the absolute corruption and destruction of mankind. Satan cannot help to facilitate the fall of man and then claim had he further involvement with man, he could have set things right. God allowed Satan and his demonic corps a chance to repair the earth but all they did was further destroy it. In fact, their involvement was so destructive, that God had to destroy the earth with a flood.

We would expect, just as there are mythological records of the Nephilim from before the flood, that history would also bear some record of the flood and an ark. The Bible, being God's Word, has the accurate account; however, one would expect to find evidence of this in other historical records. One author, F.A. Filby notes that "there is no other story of an ancient event in all the world so widely accepted [as the flood]." From Nippur, in Southern Babylonia, we have a cuneiform tablet which tells of a king, Ziusuddu, having been warned that the gods were about to bring upon the earth a deluge, who built a boat to escape this flood. This Sumerian record has been

dated as approximately 2000 B.C., although the oral version probably predates this considerably. There are several Akkadian accounts from both Assyrian and Babylonia. One of the more famous of these is one written in Akkadian and is a portion of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Ea, a god, warns Uta-napishtim concerning the flood that is to come. Uta then builds a boat to save his family, various craftsmen, animals and gold and silver. The flood in this version lasted but seven days and the boat comes to rest on a mountain in NW Persia. Uta sends out a dove, then a swallow and finally a raven. The raven does not return, so Uta and company exit the boat and make sacrifices to the gods.

Insofar as geological evidence is concerned, there is a difference of opinion concerning that. Several authors contend that there has been nothing discovered, as of yet, that would irrefutably indicate a flood of the disastrous proportions recorded in Genesis. Others, with less reliable archeological backgrounds, believe that there have been several discoveries that point to the flood of Genesis. There have been a dozen "ark sightings", but none have produced pictures or any other corroborating evidence. And, at this point in time, it is highly unlikely that an archeological team will be given the financial backing to search the mountains of Urartu for a ship. Furthermore, there is great prejudice on both sides. Most geologists have a view of things which treat C-14 dating methods as infallible and they had a set of assumptions and beliefs under which they operate. On the other hand, the Christian community itself has a great deal of prejudice in this area.

Finally, there is the question as to how large an area was affected by the great flood. There are two basic viewpoints, one is that it was a world wide flood covering the entire earth to the highest mountain. This would require approximately eight times the amount of water than presently exists on the earth. Whether this water existed prior to the flood and was unleashed and then removed from the earth, we do not know. God is capable of effecting such an incredible miracle. It could have been a local flood, covering the entire populated earth. The word for land and earth are the same in the Hebrew and the word for heaven could mean the entire atmosphere of the earth, the heavens above or the general sky from horizon to horizon. One can even speculate as to whether God used a heavenly body, such as a comet, to have a tremendous gravitational pull upon the water to that portion of the world. We simply do not know and the Bible is not specific in this regard. What is clear in the recording of the flood is that it did destroy all flesh from the earth at that time.

For years, I will admit that I was somewhat skeptical of a worldwide flood. I thought that perhaps it was a very dramatic, albeit, local flood. However, Robert Dean convinced me that it had to be a worldwide flood, with the following points:

### Robert Dean on Why the Noahic Flood was Worldwide

- 1) The text itself tells us that the flood was universal. If the flood was local, why did Noah have to build an ark in the first place? Modern man did not build a ship equivalent to the size of the ark until 1856. It was a huge ship and it had more than enough room for the animals and the humans on board. So if the flood was local he had 120 years to walk to the other side of the mountains and miss the flood altogether.
- 2) If the flood was local, why did God send the animals to the ark so they would escape death. There would have been other animals to reproduce that particular kind of those who were the ones that died. They could have migrated another 100 miles and they would have been out of danger.
- 3) If the flood was local, why was the ark big enough to hold all the kinds of land vertebrate animals that have ever existed. If only the local Mesopotamian animals were threatened the ark could have been much smaller.
- 4) If the flood was local, why would birds have been sent on board. They could have flown across to a nearby mountain range.
- 5) If the flood was local, how could the waters rise to a height of fifteen cubits (21-22 feet) about the mountains-Genesis 7:20. We have to remember that water seeks its own level and couldn't rise to cover the local mountains and leave the rest of the world untouched.
- 6) If the flood was local, it would not have solved the problem of the corruption of the human race, which was itself a world-wide phenomenon.
- 7) If the flood was local, people who did not happen to be living in the vicinity would not be affected by it. **"As it was in the days of Noah."** If the flood was local then by analogy that would mean the Tribulation would

## Robert Dean on Why the Noachic Flood was Worldwide

also be partial. If the flood is reduced to a local situation it has implications for how we understand the Tribulation.

- 8) If the flood was local, then God has repeatedly broken His promise to never flood the earth again. Large local floods occur all of the time. To be consistent with that it must be a universal flood.

Let me add a point:

- 9) If this was a local flood, then corrupted mankind could have found some place to escape to. Recall, there were perhaps billions living on the earth at this time. If any place existed to which they could flee and have temporary safety, we may reasonably assume some would have done that.

This comes from Dean's notes on his own lectures:

<http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen041.htm> (I slightly edited the text)

The audio lecture is lesson #41 which can be downloaded from here:

<http://deanbible.org/andromeda.php?q=f&f=%2FAudio+Files%2F2003+-+Genesis>

Based upon these points, I would be hard-pressed to come up with reasonable counter-arguments.

**"Make for yourself an ark of cypress wood; you will make the ark with rooms, and shall coat it inside and out with pitch. And this is how you will make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits."** [Gen. 6:14–15]

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, previously mentioned, the ark in it was a 200 foot cube. This would have made a very unseaworthy vessel unless it was completely enclosed without any openings, and then it would have spun around and turned upside down, etc. the ark in a Greek legend was 3000' x 1200', which is way too large. Similar ratios to those given by God to Noah are used today. We do not know exactly the length of a cubit, but 18" is close, making this ark 450' x 75'. This is not unlike the dimensions of a modern ocean liner. So, God has given us very accurate and reasonable measurements for the ark, yet left us without absolute geological proof of the flood and the existence of the ark. This does not mean that the geological proof does not exist; it just means that we have not discovered it yet.

Kâphar (כַּפַּר) [pronounced *kaw-FAHR*] is the word usually translated atonement; it means covering. It usually means that God does not see us for our real selves because our nature has been covered up from his sight. It is a reference to seeing Jesus Christ instead of seeing us when it comes to the judgment that we deserve. Actual forgiveness is not based upon this covering; it is a shadow of things to come. The death of our Lord on the cross provides us with the real forgiveness. The ark is a *type* of Christ. The family of Noah is inside the ark, covered and protected from God's judgement. Note that Noah is delivered through the storm; God still allows the earth to flood where Noah and his family are; God just provides for them a way of escape. This way of escape is a covering.

The time that Noah spent working on this ark with the help only of his three sons was his testimony to the world. When he was questioned, he explained to them clearly that God was going to judge the world with a flood and that only those in the ark would survive.

**"You will make a roof for the ark and finish it to within a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark on the side of it; you will make it with lower, second and third decks."** [Gen. 6:16]

The cubit opening around the roof was to allow for air circulation; rather important when traveling with several thousand animals for a year in an ocean liner. There was only one door; again, analogous to salvation. Jesus said, **"I am the door; if any man enters in through Me, he will be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."**

**"[Now] observe that I, [even] I, will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life. Everything from under the heaven that is on the earth shall die."** [Gen. 6:17]

It is verse like this in the English that make people adamantly hold for a universal flood. Personally, if the Bible teaches a universal flood and there is no evidence of any sort discovered, then I will believe the Bible.

**But I will establish My covenant with you; and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.** [Gen. 6:18]

Altogether, that was eight people. We do not know if Noah had other sons and daughters. This is never mentioned. If Noah wrote this, it is possible that he did not even want to think about his other children since it would be a very painful memory. After 500 years, you would expect that he would have had more children. We all proceed 100% from the genetic pool of Adam and Eve; however, only partially from Noah and his wife. Each of his sons was married to a woman, likely from outside the family (although we do not know this for certain; these women could have been their sisters). In any case, the wives are progeny of Adam and Eve, and we are descended from one of them.

**"And of every living thing of all flesh, you will bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind; two of every kind shall come to you to keep alive. And, as for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible and store it for yourselves; and it will serve as food for you and for them."** [Gen. 6:19–21]

Modern ocean liners are known to take hundreds of animals and their provisions along with hundreds of people and provisions for them. How many animals exactly were involved is not said. At this point in time, it appears as though man and animals are all vegetarians. There will be restricted movement and restricted activity for the next year, so it would not be unexpected that the animal's system would go into a kind of hibernation. Reduced activity and reduced in take of food. The animals coming to the ark was not necessarily a miracle. Noah had 120 years to prepare for this. He did not necessarily need to go out and capture these animals himself. Just as animals are bought and sold today, it is not out of the question for man to buy and sell animals then. Furthermore, since man did not eat animals then, they were not necessarily as fearful of man as they are now. Also, Noah needed to carry only one pair of dogs, for example; the breeds came later. The same with horses, cows, etc. Therefore, the number of animals required would be much less.

I have never made the calculations for the size of the ark as contrasted to the number of animals; but something which might help to explain how little space is needed. If we decided to take every man, woman and child from our entire planet and stand them next to one another, you would be amazed as to how little room is necessary. To take round numbers, take 6 billion, multiply by, say, 3 square feet (1.7' x 1.7') to represent the amount of space each would occupy, and then divide that by 5280 and divide again by 5280 (because there are 5280 x 5280 square feet in a square mile), that would tell you how large an area the entire present population of the earth would occupy. It is surprisingly small, isn't it? With God's grace, the control and survival for these animals was carried out.

**So Noah did, according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.** [Gen. 6:22]

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---



# Genesis 7

**Genesis 7** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 7:1–8:22

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

v. 12      [The Flood Time Table](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 6 covered the corruption of mankind on the earth and the reasons for the flood. God also promises the flood in chapter 6 and explains exactly what will happen to Noah. In Gen. 7, we have Noah's obedience to God's instructions and the actual flood itself.

**And Yahweh said to Noah, "Enter into the ark, you and your household; for you have I seen righteous before me in this generation" [Gen. 7:1]**

Fallen angelic creation has had an opportunity to think about what it has done for centuries—perhaps millenniums—and when given the opportunity to come back to the earth, they have not learned a lesson, they have not reformed, they do not recognize God's power and righteousness. The sum total of their influence over the newly fallen world is one of corruption and violence. Only Noah—weak, humble Noah (this is in comparison to the angelic host on the earth) is righteous before God. His righteousness is observed by fallen and elect angels alike.

**"You will take with you from every kind of clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean, two, a male and his female; also of the birds of the heavens, by sevens, a male and female; to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth." {Gen. 7:2–3]**

In the antediluvian state, it appears almost as though there were a kind of right man/right woman with animals with the possessive *his* female. *By sevens* is literally *seven seven*, meaning there were seven males and seven females taken into the ark of the clean animals. There was apparently some sort of a theological development in the antediluvian state that we are not partial to whatsoever. We do not hear about *clean* and *unclean* animals until we get to *Leviticus* 7 and 10. What was the proper protocol in the antediluvian system and the method of spirituality is at best alluded to. We know that animal sacrifices were required as plainly stated in the record of Cain and Abel (and implied by Gen. 3:21). Distinguishing between clean and unclean animals tells us that this was a more elaborate system than just going out and killing any animal (clean and unclean in the antediluvian life was not a matter of what animals could be eaten because animals were not eaten prior to the flood). These additional animals were for sacrifices and not necessarily for food. It is possible, however, that the half breeds of Gen. 6 began eating meat. This is only hypothetical. Man was not specifically allowed to eat meat until after the flood.

I sat down with the calculator and, looking at the normal value given for a cubit (18") and taking one set of numbers for animals and birds, determined the square footage allotted to each pair of animals. According to taxonomists, there are approximately 4500 different species of animals and 8650 species of birds (there have been comparatively few extinctions of animals during the past 10,000 years). In allowing 500 of the animals and all of the birds to occupy one floor of the ark, that leaves 2000 pairs of animals for each of the other two floors. If my math can be depended upon, that leaves an average of 16 square feet per pair of animals on the ark. Certainly, for a pair of elephants, this is too small, but for a pair of mice, this is more than adequate. Furthermore,

not being a biologist, I do not know what species of animals would have common ancestors. It surprises me that greyhounds, St. Bernard's and beagles all have a common ancestor. In examining other people, I am surprised that we have a common ancestor in Adam and Noah. My point here is that I do not know if 4500 species would be necessary. How many common ancestors some groups of animals would have is beyond my realm of expertise, however the figures which I have put together make this a reasonable size for an ark. Insofar as feeding and waste removal, we are given no information; but my thoughts are there was a supernatural force at work preserving the animals just as there was one which brought the animals to the ark in the first place. It would not surprise me that most of the animals went into a state of divine-induced hibernation during the year that they were in the ark.

There is no reason to suppose that this is a myth or a fable. I have heard one person call this a fable which teaches conservation. This, as a fable, teaches absolutely nothing to us. We cannot look upon our antediluvian ancestors and look upon this as a story of warning to us. We do not have to be concerned about a flood because God has promised us in Gen. 8:21–22 that He will never destroy the entire population of the earth with a flood. What God is doing is He has finished with one dispensation entirely; He has allowed the fallen angels to cohabit with man and thereby have direct input upon the state of the world; and has shown that demonic involvement in our day-to-day affairs is not an improvement but results in violence and licentiousness (Gen. 6:1, 2, 11) and in a world without a concern or an interest in its creator (Matt. 24:38).

**For, after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made." [Gen. 7:4]**

Although it is not alluded to in the Bible, it is not unimaginable that some fallen angels cohabited with animals. Degenerate man has been known to do such a thing. Furthermore, half man/half animals continually show up in mythology. And God destroyed the animals along with the human race.

Zodhiates points out that the forty days and forty nights are not arbitrary, but a number often used by God when testing or judging. When Moses spoke to God on Mount Sinai, he was on the mountain for forty days (Ex. 24:18 Deut. 9:9). Israel, due to the apostasy of the first free generation, wandered the desert for forty years (Num. 14:32–35 Deut. 29:5). When a civil case was tried in court, the loser was not awarded forty million dollars in judgement but was struck up to forty times. Elijah went without food and fled Jezebel for forty days and nights (1Sam. 19:1–8). God judged Egypt by scattering its inhabitants and leaving the land fallow for forty years (Ezek. 29:1–13). Our Lord fasted and was tested by the devil for forty days and nights (Matt. 4:1–11).

**And Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him. Now Noah was 600 years old when the flood of water came upon the earth. The Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood. [Gen. 7:5–6]**

Nothing is said about the Holy Spirit and Noah here. There had to be some involvement with Noah and the Spirit as God said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever." This indicates that Noah's building of the ark and an explanation was to what he was doing as evangelism. It is likely that no one prior to Noah even had built a boat or a ship. Whereas man was fully capable of such a project, there is no indication that he ever did prior to Noah. Since then, people have tried to imitate Noah; in many towns there is some person building an ark for the oncoming flood. It is one of the town's kooks. Noah also attracted a lot of attention. First of all, he was one of the only persons who was still alive who was 100% human (along with his immediate family). Secondly, he was building an ark because of an oncoming flood (it is possible that it had never even rained before). And thirdly, he spoke of Yahweh, the God of Adam, who walked with Adam and the woman in the garden. For all intents and purposes, Noah was the first evangelist, and one of the least successful by human standards. He evangelized a world for 120 years and during that time three of his sons and his wife and three women came to know Yahweh and to believe in Yahweh<sup>33</sup>.

---

<sup>33</sup> Notice also that God provided exactly one woman each for each of Noah's sons. The world was filled with women, yet only one woman chose each son of Noah to serve. This again points to God's design of one man for one woman; further, one right man and one right woman.

Notice also that this is a fulfillment of what was said in Acts 11:14; **And he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.** It is easier to evangelize strangers because they do not know what you are like in real life. Those of your immediate family are the toughest to reach because they see you day in and day out and they know every bit of hypocrisy that is in your soul.

**Of clean animals and animals that are not clean, and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, they went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came about after the seven days that the water of the flood come [literally, the waters of the flood were] upon the earth.** [Gen. 7:8–10]

Notice that Noah was commanded to bring the animals into the ark, but God was the one who made it possible for this to occur. Whether or not any of this was miraculous, we are not told; in any case, it is never alluded to as such. Furthermore, How these animals were chosen was probably based upon very practical reasons. I believe that Noah and his sons had assembled an animal preserve over the past 120 years, and that they took the best of the lot into the ark. Had there been any commingling of demons and animals, then God would have certainly excluded those animals from the ark.

**In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open and the floodgates [or, windows] of the sky were opened and the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.** [Gen. 7:11–12]

This is not a fable to teach us anything; the flood and Noah and his ark all really occurred. The Bible is very specific as to names and dates.

This also gives us a time table:

### The Flood Time Table

- At Flood minus 120, God came to Noah and began to tell him what would occur 120 years in the future and what Noah had to do to prepare for it. Noah began to build the ark. He also probably began to establish an animal preserve on his property.
- Around F minus 100, Noah (who is already about 500 years old) began to have the children who would travel with him on the ark. We do not know whether he had other children, sons or daughters or not. However, it is due to this restricted gene pool that the age of man began to decline rapidly. Whereas man at one time lived to be nearly a millennium; he would almost immediately drop to 500 years old, and, in a few generations, to what our age is today. If you took any group of people and began to inbreed, there would be a lowering of the life expectancy of their children and children's children.
- At F minus 90, Noah's children begin to grow up and notice that Noah is the odd man out. Their father is building an ark and warning those around him of an impending flood. They apparently trusted Noah so much, even through their teens, that they believed him and remained with him.
- F minus 80: Very likely, after Noah had been working on this ark for 40 years or so, his sons began to help him finish the ark. Sometime around this time, these young men would marry, and it would not be out of the question for them to marry their sisters.
- We are now at F minus zero; Noah's children are fully grown, capable of making their own decisions, and are married. They are probably the only uncorrupted male flesh upon the earth. They are all around a hundred years old and about to enter the ark.

Now would be the time to deal with the extent and the location of the flood. The Hebrew word for flood is used only in connection with the Genesis flood and the Greek translation of the word is found only in connection with this flood (with the exception of Psalm 29:10). That means that this word does not tell us the extent or the location of the flood. Very likely it covers the entirety of the inhabited world, but we do not know how large that area is. We cannot assume that the flood took place in or around Mesopotamia. Such a thing is assumed because the rivers the Tigris and the Euphrates are mentioned. If this record is made by someone from the antediluvian era, then they would have no knowledge of the present day Euphrates and Tigris rivers. It has been the habit of man throughout all of human history to name a new area to which he has come after an old area from whence he came. Where Noah and the ark landed could have been thousands of miles away from where he began. The land where Noah was could have been in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, totally submerged at this point in time. The flood carried over to other nearby portions of the earth, to the point where the ark did rest upon Mount Ararat and civilization began anew in the Mesopotamian area. The word translated *earth* can also mean *land*. *Heavens* also can mean the entire universe above us and it can refer to only that which goes from horizon to horizon. When all the earth and mountains under the heavens are covered by flood waters, this could refer to a continent off the coast of Europe or Africa, long since submerged. This land could have been low to the water to begin with, the mountains were not necessarily 14,000 feet high (or even 2000 feet high). It could have been laying upon a great body of water (throughout the world, there are bodies of water beneath the surface of the earth). The fountains of the deep refer to water coming from below. The windows of the heavens refer to water coming from above. The water came down with such force that the people and animals were engulfed between the waters and drown. Wherever this area was, it was large enough to support a fairly large population (some have estimated that the earth's population at this time could have numbered in the billions).

I need to make clear that this is only a thought, a theory and there is nothing in the Bible which would substantiate this nor preclude it from the list of possible flood scenarios. Psalm 74:13 reads: **You divided the sea by Your strength and you broke the heads of the great sea creatures in the waters.** Such a passage to me suggests that there was a division of the waters took place after the flood (in fact, there are several verses in Psalm 74 which make this an ideal psalm to teach after Genesis 8. It would help to explain why we have not found irrefutable evidence of a Genesis flood in the mid-East and it may be the source of stories of the famous submerged continent Atlantis. There is no reason that this flood has to be the product of a natural series of events either. God can work within the confines of nature and outside those confines. God invented all the physical laws to which we are subject yet He is not. I do not mean in anyway to denigrate the great flood of Genesis or doubt God's ability to cover the entire earth with water. However, that is not necessarily the scenario presented here and we must go by the scenario presented to us in the Word. What we can be certain of is that this flood covered the mountains of the populated area of the earth, destroyed all the human and partially human beings and all of the animal upon the earth, and that there was an incredible amount of water brought from below as well as from above when the flood came. Whereas the days of restoration are likely 24 hours and whereas we can be fairly certain that there are no gaps in the Adamic line presented in Gen. 5; concerning this flood, the Bible does not allow us to be as dogmatic about its extent or its location. If such a theory is correct, then I should deal with man and his tendency to explore. Those who explore are primarily men. If there are any famous female sea captains, then I do not know their names. The population of the earth was composed primarily of human women and fallen angels and their progeny. Man, who would normally explore, was probably destroyed or killed. The fallen angels were far superior in every way to the human male and the violence upon the earth certain referred to murder and fighting. It is likely that the human males mostly perished during this time period. The fallen angels were content to cohabit with the beautiful human females and the half angelic creation was also similarly disposed. My point being is that these angelic beings, although they had been throughout the entire world in the past, had no need to build ships and travel from their general area. They were interested in the women and the women were right there.

Robert Dean provides the most extensive proof of a worldwide flood that I have seen:  
<http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen041.htm>

The audio lecture is lesson #41 which can be downloaded from here:  
<http://deanbible.org/andromeda.php?q=f&f=%2FAudio+Files%2F2003+--Genesis>

**On the very same day, Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth and the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark; they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath [or, spirit] of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed [the door] behind him.**  
[Gen. 7:12–16]

Now it sounds as though Noah and his family entered the ark on the day that it began to rain and flood. I have also noticed that this author has become rather repetitive. Vv. 6–10 give us an overview. Then this story is basically repeated in vv. 11–24 but with more details. The door could be opened from the inside and only closed from the outside. God—Jesus Christ—closed the door behind Noah.

In my thinking concerning this flood, I have thought that earthquakes and falling and rising lands would be possible. I have thought that some mountain ranges could have been formed due to this flood. Others before have had the same thoughts, but there is not agreement here with the geologists. However, it would be helpful at this time to note a reading from the Psalms: *He [Yahweh] appointed [to] the earth its fixed, established place [i.e., its orbit] so that it would not totter [or, be shaken] forever and ever. The sea as with a garment, You covered with it. The waters were standing above the mountains. At Your rebuke, they fled; at the sound of Your thunder, they hurried away. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which You had established for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass over; that they may not return to cover the earth.* (Psalm 104:5–9). This portion of Psalm 104 belongs to the restoration of the earth or to the flood. Under restoration, the angelic host had inhabited the earth but they destroyed it with their partying. God froze the earth in an ice pack (this is the ice age) and later restored it. At the time of restoration, there were major changes in the earth's surface; the valleys sunk lower and the mountains rose higher. However, we have a parallel situation with the flood. Due to the angelic host living upon the earth again, God covered the earth (or at least the inhabited portion of the earth) with water. At the proper time, the waters receded and it is possible (but I would not stake my theological life upon it) that the valleys sunk again and the mountains rose even further. However, v. 9 seems to indicate that we are speaking of the Genesis flood here because the writer says *that they might not return to cover the earth*. After the ice age, the waters did return and covered at least a portion of the earth.

*Cover* in Psalm 104:6 is in the Piel perfect, meaning that this was an intensive, completed action. The process of covering was not a gentle occurrence, but could refer to the destruction of a flood or to the desolation of an ice age. However, it has a third person, masculine singular suffix where we would expect a feminine suffix to correspond with the *earth*. The only masculine singular anywhere around is *garment*.

**Then the flood was upon the earth for forty days; and the water increased and lifted up the ark so that it kept rising higher above the earth. And the water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains which were under the heavens were covered.**  
[Gen. 7:17–19]

Noah is in the ark but there is that opening between the top and the ark. Since he possibly has never even seen rain before, he and his family are probably amazed watching the water come down around them. As far as he could see, there was no more land.

**And the water prevailed fifteen cubits deep above the mountains.** [Gen. 7:20]

Actually, *above the mountains* is really *and the mountains were covered*. However, I believe that the point of the author was that not only were the mountains under water (v. 19), but they were 15 cubits (approximately 22 feet) below the surface of the water (v. 20). Even for smaller mountains in a local area, this is nothing short of incredible. As I had mentioned before, it would not surprise me if the gravitational force of a comet were involved at this point. This does not mean that God requires something of that nature; however, He often uses natural phenomena to accomplish His plan.

**And all flesh that moved upon the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind. Of all that was on the dry land all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. [Gen. 7:21–23]**

God had given the world 120 years to watch Noah build this ark and they had been told what He was going to do and the world chose to ignore Noah and his message of impending destruction. God fulfills His promises to us.

**And the water prevailed upon the earth 150 days. [Gen. 7:24]**

Comparing Gen. 7:11, 24 and 8:3–4, we see that we have five thirty day months. The heavens rained for forty days, but the waters continued to flood the land around Noah for an additional 110 days. He could have traveled a great distance during that time. in a storm which was that powerful. There is no need to think that Noah just put down anchor and basically was in the same spot where he left five months previous to this 150<sup>th</sup> day. He very likely did a great deal of moving. Whereas, it would be possible to determine how far a ship could travel in 5 months and to draw that sort of a radius about where Noah landed, I think that it is a reasonable bet that he came from somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean.

There is a certain amount of agreement between historical geology and the Bible; and between some legends and the Bible. The greatest area of contention is the time frame. Geologists agree that something akin to an ice age has occurred—several, in fact—and that great parts of the earth have been packed in ice. The first couple verse of Genesis, as we have seen, seems to indicate the same thing. Geologists do not view mountains as having always existed, but that several major mountain ranges have risen dramatically. in the past. Psalm 104 is in agreement with that. During the time that the mountain ranges rose, shallow oceans and marshy areas dried up.<sup>34</sup> This is in total agreement with the Biblical record of the flood (Psalm 104; Gen. 8:3,7). Historical geology postulates that there have been some dramatic climatic changes during the earth's history<sup>35</sup>; Genesis 1 supports this, as well as the changes which occurred before and after the flood. The mountains, at one point in time in the history of the earth, began to wear down.<sup>36</sup> This is in total agreement with a large-sale flood similar to the revealed Genesis. Plato tells us about a major continent called Atlantis, once out in the Atlantic Ocean, which was submerged totally in a flood. This is possibly the area where the antediluvian civilization began and the area which was completely deluged by Noah's flood.

One Christian author, W. U. Ault, lists a number of difficulties encountered by those who have tried to prove the existence of a universal flood. In fact, he sounds more like a devil's advocate at times, accepting a great many of the presuppositions of geology. However, one of the figures which he gives us, which I have not yet found his corroborating source, is that during the Wisconsin Ice Age or 40,000 years ago, the sea level was approximately 330 feet lower than what it is today.<sup>37</sup>

One theory given for the source of the water for the flood is the canopy theory. It is assumed here that the earth was enveloped by a atmosphere or outer atmosphere of water or water vapor which provided a very different environment for the antediluvian civilization. If such an atmosphere existed, it was used in the flood, as now the atmosphere contains only a small portion of water vapor.

---

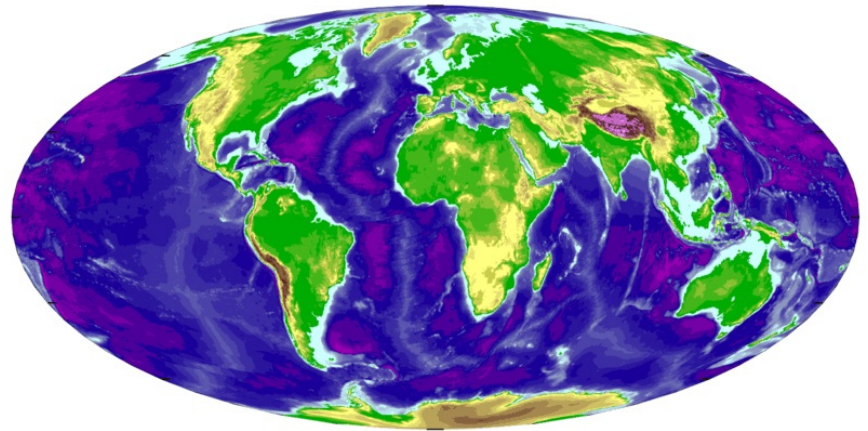
<sup>34</sup> *World Book Encyclopedia*; Vol. 15; ©1983; p. 664

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*; p. 665

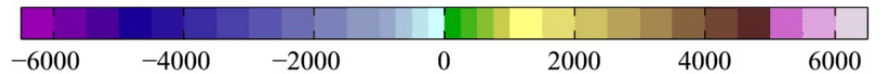
<sup>36</sup> *ibid*; p. 665

<sup>37</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia or the Bible*; Vol. 2; p. 552; ©1976

Another theory is, the mountains during this period of time were not as high, nor the valleys as low; Wikipedia, a source which I do not care to rely on for much, says that if the earth's surface was flat, then the oceans would cover us up for a distance of 2.7 km (we'd be more than a mile underwater).<sup>38</sup> The violence of the water over everything would have caused great destruction, resulting in earthquakes, volcanos, and greater valley depths in places. Most of the earth is 0–1000 ft. in elevation. There are very few places on this earth which are above 4000 ft. And there are many more places in the ocean which are 6000 ft. deep as compared to places on the earth which are that high.



Present day Earth topography [m]



From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:AYool\\_topography\\_15min.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:AYool_topography_15min.png)

This theory, by the way, is not one which I simply pulled out of thin air. Psalm 104:5–8:

*Who laid the foundations of the earth, That it should not be moved forever. You covered it with the deep as with a vesture; The waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; At the voice of your thunder they hurried away (The mountains rose, the valleys sank down) To the place which you had founded for them. Since the idea that mountains rose and valleys sank down further, creating a greater contrast between the high and low points of this earth, it appears as though the Bible does support the notion of a violent geographical change after the flood.*

There is another theory that the water covered the inhabited earth, and, although this seems to differ from the Biblical account, one could make a rational argument that the language of Scripture allows for this.

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

<sup>38</sup> From a footnote: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth#\\_note-25](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth#_note-25) (these notes do change number).

**Genesis 8** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 8

### Genesis 8:1–22

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

Introduction:

**But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth and the waters subsided.** [Gen. 8:1]

Although I have probably read this verse several times, this is the first time that I have actually read it. I don't understand exactly what it means. I do not know the mechanics as to how the waters were gathered up where Noah and his ark were, but God apparently caused these waters to dissipate with a tremendous wind and scattered the water about the world. It is during this time, if I am reading Psalm 104 correctly, that the mountains and valleys became more pronounced (although this does not correspond with geology which holds that these things were done billions of years ago). This verse also indicates that during this storm; during this 150 days, there was no direct contact between God and Noah. Using the anthropopathism *God remembered Noah* indicates the lack of contact during that time.

**Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed and the rain from the sky was restrained. Then the water receded steadily from the land, and at the end of 150 days, the waters [began to] decrease [evaporate or disappear].** [Gen. 8:2–3]

Shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo<sup>b</sup>v*] is in the Qal imperfect and it means *to retreat, to return, to turn back*. It is a very common word in the Hebrew, given several pages in *Brown Driver Briggs*. The waters from under the ground returned to beneath the surface of the earth. kâlâ' (כָּלָא) [pronounced *kaw-LAW*] means *to shut up, to restrain, to withhold*. It is in the Niphal imperfect, which is the simple passive stem in the Hebrew. God caused the rain to stop and caused the waters from below to stop. châçêr (חָצַר) [pronounced *khaw-SEHR*] means *to lack, lacking, to need* as well as *to decrease*. With respect to water, it means *to disappear*. This refers to the evaporation of the water as well as to the water flowing back into underground streams and river. Since the water does not decrease or dissipate all in one day, *began to* has been inserted into the translation.

**And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.** [Gen. 8:4]

The ark, like an ship, will be primarily under the water. Only a portion of the ship is above the water. This is why it could come to rest on a mountain, yet surrounding mountains could not be seen. We are not necessarily on the highest mountains in the world, or even in that area. As far as the eye could see, there were no other mountains. This could have been prevented by the heavy evaporation and the tremendous fog and water vapor which would have been in the air at this time. It is likely that this referred to an area later known as Urartu, which flourished during the Assyrian empire near Lake Van in Armenia. It is rendered both *Armenia* and *Ararat* in various translations and occurs but four times in the Old Testament.

**And the waters decreased steadily until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.** [Gen. 8:5]



*Became visible* is the Hebrew word for *to see*, but it is in the Niphal perfect, which is the passive voice, completed action. They looked out of the ark and suddenly, there they were; some other mountains. Where they were, there was still no area of land to walk upon, since it was only the tops of these mountains which had become visible to them. Due to the receding water and to the decrease of some of the fog, these mountains had become visible to the inhabitants of the ark. In reading this, this makes me think that this was a diary kept by Noah (I should say a record or a ship's log) in which Noah recorded the events. It reads as though he would write one or two lines, tend to the animals on board, and then, a few days later (or even months later) add a few lines. This might account for many of the things being said twice. Noah was very impressed by the behavior of the animals and how they wandered up the ark ramp in twos, so he mentions this twice and alludes to it a third time. The tremendous rain is also mentioned twice and alluded to a couple of times.

**Then it came about that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove from him to see if the water was abated from the face of the land, but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot; so she returned to him into the ark; for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark to himself.** [Gen. 8:6–9]

There is an opening around the ark so that Noah and his family can see out. However, the animals are kept in their various rooms. In the bird room, or in a room adjacent to them, Noah had built a window, which he did under God's direction or due to foresight. When Noah *opened* the window and *sent* out the bird, these verbs were both in the imperfect tense, indicating that these are successive actions. However, when he *built* the window, this is in the perfect tense, meaning it was a completed action, like from the past.

**So he waited yet another seven days, and again, sent out the dove from the ark. And the dove came to him toward evening and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove but she did not return to him again.** [Gen. 8:10–12]

On the side of a mountain, apparently some seeds had begun to germinate, and a few inches of an olive tree had begun to grow, along with a leaf, which the dove picked during her first trip to the outside world. However, there was still not enough out there in terms of food and land for the dove to want to remain out of the ark. However, the second time, the dove found food and a place to lighten feet, so she remained in the world.

**Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and, behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.** [Gen. 8:13–14]

At this point, Noah and crew are becoming more excited about exiting the ark and Noah is writing fewer things down twice. Twice, it is stated in the Qal perfect that the waters were dried up and the same Hebrew word is used. This is simple; Noah is not repeating himself. The first use of *dry* means that the water was no longer on the surface of the ground; the second use of *dry* means that the ground was no longer muddy, but a consistency upon which Noah and crew could walk.

**Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth that they may breed abundantly on the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth."** [Gen. 8:15–17]

The last three verbs are all in the Qal perfect. God knows the end from the beginning and is stating a fact which He views as a consummated whole. From Noah's viewpoint, the animals would continue to breed and multiply; from God's viewpoint, He has decreed that it will occur and it has occurred insofar as God is concerned. In terms

of meanings, it is likely that breed has to do with the animals mating; fruitful is their fertility and multiply is the animals will grow to adulthood and have continued generations.

Concerning the amount of time that Noah and crew were in the ark is reported variously as 365 days and as 371 days. The fact that it was about one year is significant, and all the information that we need in terms of the time frame.

**So Noah went out and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing and every bird—everything that moves upon the earth—went out by their families from the ark.** [Gen. 8:18–19]

It is interesting that these animals went in by twos, but they come out by their families. This indicates that some of these animals bred while in captivity. Then Noah does something which he could not do aboard the ark; something that he was been waiting a full year to do:

**Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.** [Gen. 8:20]

Throughout this ordeal, Noah has been a man with the correct priorities. He does not begin building a home; he does not send his family foraging for food; he builds an altar and offers sacrifices to God. Noah was justified by faith in Jesus Christ as the Revealed Member of the Godhead. Man at this time, and for many years, was quite demonstrative; therefore, what he did on the exterior was a mirror of what had occurred on the interior. We cannot see into the heart of other men; however, Noah, as a testimony to grace and deliverance, offers sacrifices to God. These sacrifices speak of Jesus Christ dying for our sins upon the cross. This is a testimony to his family, on behalf of himself and his family; and a testimony to the angels and a testimony to us throughout all the ages. His building an ark for 120 years was a testimony to fallen man and unregenerate mankind. On the earth at this time are people who are all believers in Jesus Christ.

We have three historical civilizations and two future civilizations on the earth throughout history; all three have begun with believers only. When God created the heavens and the earth, He made it a place for the angels; this is prehistory insofar as we are concerned. Then He restored the earth for Adam and the woman; also both believers. This time, the people beginning the civilization on the earth was Noah and his family. In the future, following the tribulation, the world will begin again with believers only. At the end of the millennium, the earth will again be cleansed and a new heavens and a new earth shall be created for the believers who will begin.

Also notice that there is no command from God to do this. This is the mature response of a believer. The first thing that Noah thought of was to sacrifice to God.

**And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to His heart, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the inclination of man is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."** [Gen. 8:21]

We have to be careful about ascribing to God the kind of thoughts that we would have. God did not destroy every living creature from the face of the earth and then decide, "Maybe I shouldn't have been so harsh; next time I'll give them a little more slack." God is making a divine decree here. What He did had to be done. Just as cancer growing inside a person should be cut out; just as a society needs its degenerate members culled out; God had to take out the corrupted flesh. Man in the next civilization is not going to be more moral or better in any way; man will, however, be 100% Homo sapiens and fallen angels will not be allowed to interfere with man's life as they did prior to the flood.

From the standpoint of man, it would appear as though God has inflicted His wrath upon the earth almost without mercy. Therefore, the word *nîychôach* (נִיחֹחַ) [pronounced *nee-KHOH-ahkh*] is used to describe the odor of the sacrifice: *soothing, tranquilizing*. God does not require soothing; He does not have ruffled feathers; however, this is an anthropopathism, ascribing to God an emotion or thought that He does not actually have so that we can have

a better understanding. God smells the sacrifice, which speaks of His Son dying on our behalf, and is satiated. Noah, by making this sacrifice, is testifying to his own salvation through faith in Yahweh Elohim.

V. 22 appears to be still a quote from God speaking to His heart; however, it is in a poetic form.

**While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest; and cold and heat; and summer and winter; and day and night shall not cease.** [Gen. 8:22]

During the tenure of the earth, all these things mentioned in v. 22 will remain in existence by the decree of God.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 9** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 9

### Genesis 9:1–29

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

**Introduction:** Chapter 9 is the new civilization and the slightly changed earth. We will see the life expectancy to drop abruptly and we will see the existence of bacteria, which did not seem to exist or was not a factor in the antediluvian system. We will also see behavior which is certainly unbecoming a Christian in this chapter. It is all recorded for our benefit. There is not a man in Scripture who does not have feet of clay. This further indicates the unusual material which is found in the Scripture; most people spend a great deal of time justifying themselves—however, those who wrote Scripture record even their most embarrassing moments or the most serious mistakes that they made; and these are recorded unabashedly, without apology and without justification.

**And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."**

[Gen. 9:1]

It is of the utmost importance when studying God's Word and the various commands within it to note who is giving a command and who is receiving the command. It is important to examine whether this command is designed to be carried out by a specific person, generation, epoch or whether it holds for all time. God gave this specific command to Adam and Eve, to Noah and his sons and to the animals. This command is not repeated nor is it repealed in the New Testament. At that point in time there were but eight people alive on the earth and God had intended for them to repopulate the earth. This in no way invalidates birth control nor does it mean that population control is the order of the day. Today, those are non issues to be determined by individuals. Some families should be large and other married people should not have any children whatsoever. When it comes to that sort of thing, it is up to the individuals involved to act according to how God guides them. Further; if you do not know God's Word then just how exactly do you expect to be guided? It is possible that there is no real divine guidance apart from God's Word in our souls. Any other guidance is the result of repeated discipline.

**"Furthermore, the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are given."** [Gen. 9:2]

This is another one of those verse which I have read before, but never really read. This represents certainly a change from the garden, where there was no animosity or fear between man and the animal kingdom. After the garden, we are not told about the relationship between man and animal other than it is implied by this chapter and by the early chapters of Genesis, that man originally was a vegetarian and this changed after the flood. We are not told when animals began to eat other animals for food, but my educated guess would be at this point in time. We have developed over time the ability to kill any animal that lives and we do this for sport as well as for food. These are animals which are clearly faster, more agile and stronger than we are. The deciding difference is our intelligence. This represents a change from the ark certainly where Noah preserved the animals on the ark and they came to him by twos (although that was a miracle). V. 2 is best understood in conjunction with v. 3:

**"Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you as [I gave] the green plants. Only you shall not eat the flesh with its soul; its blood."** [Gen. 9:3–4]

This is a mini Mount Sinai. God is giving Noah instructions on what law will be in the new post-diluvian era. God will cover some dietary laws and one prohibition. Here is where man began to be a meat eater. Prior to this, sacrifices were not eaten. I don't know if sacrifices to the true God were ever eaten, but meat sacrificed to idols was. I wouldn't be surprised if meat-eating in general did not occur, particularly in the first millennium of the antediluvian era; but I would venture to guess that the part man/part angelic beings did engage in meat-eating. This is certainly conjecture on my part; but this does not appear to be something which is unthinkable to Noah; he was probably aware of meat-eating and he just probably did not engage in it. This is why God tells him how to be a meat-eater—you do not eat the animal's blood.

**"In fact I will require your blood [i.e., the life] of your souls; from (the hand of) every beast, I will require it. And from (the hand of) man and from (the hand of) every man's brother I will require the soul of man." [Gen. 9:5]**

This verse begins with a conjunction and an adverb 'ak<sup>e</sup> (אֶכ) [pronounced *ahk<sup>e</sup>*]. 'Ak emphasizes what follows, often in contrast to what precedes it. God is speaking about the blood of animals and then says what He does in v. 5 as a continuation but a contrast to v. 4. The word usually translated *require* is the Hebrew word *dârash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *daw-RASH*] and it means *to search out, to study, to inquire, to investigate*. However, it does also mean *to require* and that is the correct translation in this verse due to what follows in v. 6. Because of Cain and Abel, God requires of one's brother their soul.

**"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. And, as for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." [Gen. 9:6–7]**

*Made* is in the Qal perfect third masculine singular; so God is speaking of the Creator of man in the third person. This could be poetic license but it is more likely that God the Father speaking of God the Son. God has given explicit permission to do what might have been considered to be taboo; God has set one law in force and retribution for those who broke that law; and He gave one positive commandment:

**"Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, "Now take note, I Myself do establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you; and with every soul that is with you, the birds, the cattle and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark and even every beast of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." [Gen. 9:8–11]**

God's covenant with Noah was that He would never again destroy virtually all the lives of those upon the earth with a flood. It was not that God had made a mistake the first time or that He regretted what He did. God's plan is perfect and the earth has entered into a new epoch or a new phase. During this time, until the end of time, there will be floods and other natural disasters, but none of them will destroy, for all intents and purposes, the population of the earth. Part of what we can learn from this is that this flood was world-wide in terms of population (not necessarily in terms of land mass). One point of contention with fundamentalists and scientists is not just the occurrence of this flood, but how widespread that it was. In these past few chapters of Genesis, we have seen no reason to assume that the flood covered the entire earth, both hemispheres, so that every mountain on earth was below water. This is a view taken by those who read that *the entire earth was covered* in the King James Version and they take that literally (and the Bible should be taken literally). However, as we have noted, the word for *earth* also means *land* and that is its most common meaning and the meaning used here. In the Genesis flood, or deluge, the entire populated land was under water, including the mountains.. We can only speculate as to where this took place and my guess was on a continent in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, but there is no reason to assume that guess is equivalent to God's Word. This certainly had an effect upon the other portions of there world.

**And God said "This is the sign of the covenant which I am placing between Me and you and every living soul that is with you, for all successive generations. I have placed My rainbow [lit.,**

**bow] in a cloud and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it will come about when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow will be seen in the cloud. and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living soul of all flesh and never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the rainbow in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living soul of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth." [Gen. 9:12–17]**

The first Hebrew word to be examined is naturally *qesheth* (קֶשֶׁת) [pronounced *KEH-sheth*] and it comes from a word which means *bending*. It is usually translated *bow* or in a way related to the *bow* (as in Gen. 27:3 48:22 and over a dozen other passages). It is logical, though not conclusive, to assume that we are speaking of a rainbow, which, from the ground, appears to be an arc. The Greek word used in the Septuagint also means *bow*. It is used in conjunction with the word for *arrows*, which speaks of lightning in Habak. 3:9–11. The use of *qesheth* in Ezek. 1:28a seems to further indicate that we are speaking of a rainbow (*As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day; so was the appearance of Your surrounding radiance*). Furthermore, we have a parallel passage to this in Rev. 4:3 and 10:1 in which the Greek word used means rainbow exclusively.

The Torah points, out, as do several authors, that this *rainbow* here is not the first *rainbow* seen by man. However, it now takes on new meaning as a sign between God and man that God will not destroy the earth again with a flood. Since the rainbow is the prism effect which occurs when light is shined through raindrops (or through a mist), this would be likely. However, prior to the flood, the earth was surrounded by an atmosphere or a band of water vapor, which may have curtailed the rainbow effect until after the flood. There is no serious theological problem here, no matter which position is taken.

V. 18 is the proper beginning for another chapter. What follows is the only recorded incident concerning Noah after the flood (other than God speaking to him concerning the rainbow). We do not have the same pattern as we have seen before. It is possible that we have someone other than Noah recording the latter half of chapter 9 and there is certainly someone other than Noah who wrote Gen. 10 and following. We do not have a verse which ties the sections together. The only possibility, if we are to remain with the established pattern, is that Noah wrote Gen. 4:25–9:27 and someone else began writing with 9:28, using 10:1 to tie into 9:18. Whereas the latter half of chapter 9 could be easily attributed to Noah or to one of his sons (likely, Shem), chapter 10–11:26 could be attributed to Shem as he could have lived to see his descendant, Abram. Since Shem's line in particular is followed in the latter half of chapter 11, it is my opinion that Shem wrote Gen. 9:18–11:26. Shem writes very little about himself, yet records some incredible events.

**Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. [Gen. 9:18]**

I suspect that this was written hundreds of years after the flood, all in retrospect by Shem, while he was old. Shem lived for 502 years after the flood (Gen. 11:10–11). With a new generation beginning every 30 years or so (which is more often than we saw in Gen. 5), the earth experienced a population explosion and Canaan and his descendants had become quite famous worldwide during the time that this was committed to writing. From Gen. 10 forward, the Canaanites play a dramatic role in history.

To me, a most fascinating study would be that of racial origin. Whereas, it is quite likely that many Caucasian races proceeded from Japheth, we can only guess as to some of the ancestors of Ham. I would think that the Blacks are descended primarily through Canaan and that the oriental races might have been descended through another son of Ham. Since Noah had the genetic material from which all races came, it is possible that some of that was displayed in his sons. That along with intermarriage would make such designation difficult to ascertain, but a marvelous study nonetheless.

**These three [were] the sons of Noah and from them the whole earth was populated [lit., scattered]. [Gen. 9:19]**

The Bible clearly indicates a common ancestor for us all in Adam and then in Noah. There is no indication that Noah sired any children after the flood. Whether his wife survived much beyond the flood or whether she and Noah ever had relations again, we do not know, as she is never mentioned again. However, the following event seems to indicate that one of those two things occurred.

**And Noah began to be a farmer and therefore planted a vineyard.** [Gen. 9:20]

The consecutive Qal imperfect meaning it is a logical continuation of the narrative.

Prior to the flood, we have no indication of bacteria, leaven or anything of that sort. After the flood, such things exist and will have a profound effect upon Noah's modus operandi. He will become a bit less inhibited than we would like to witness.

**And he drank of the wine and became drunk and masturbated himself inside the tent.** [Gen. 9:21]

The word usually translated *uncovered [himself]* is the Hithpael imperfect third masculine singular of *gâlâh* (גָּלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*] and it means *to bare, to denude, to unveil, to go into exile, to emigrate, to evacuate a country*. The Hithpael means that Noah was acting upon himself; *he uncovered himself, he unveiled himself*. Obviously the word is not always used in a sexual sense, but in nearby Lev. 18:6–19, it is. The context and the Piel stem often will infer sexual activity (the Hithpael is the reflexive form of the Piel). This verse tells us that Noah got drunk, got naked and was a total embarrassment to himself and his family. Then he passed out in his tent. Ham was childish about it.

**And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.** [Gen. 9:22]

The proper thing to do in such a situation is the cover up his father, who is obviously passed out, or semi-coherent because of the wine. An honorable son would not mention this incident to anyone else. Instead, Ham makes fun of what has occurred and points this out to his brothers. His brothers react honorably to protect and hide their father's shame:

**But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine, he realized what his youngest son had done to him, so he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers."** [Gen. 9:23–25]

Since Noah's youngest son was a shame to him, treating his father without respect, Noah puts a curse upon Ham's youngest son, Canaan. A curse cannot be fulfilled when the person under the curse is honorable and has character. However, by that time, Noah could see that Canaan was most like his father and just as Ham was a shame to Noah, Canaan would be a shame to Ham. This indicates that the ancestors of Canaan, although they had a great deal of potential to begin with, later fell into slavery many times as a race and in many forms of slavery and servitude. It is fascinating that we read about this in the oldest book in existence (although the book of Job was probably written during this time, this chapter of Genesis I am certain precedes the book of Job).

**He also said "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be their servant. May God cause Japheth to be persuaded, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be their servant."** [Gen. 9:26–27]

When Noah said let Canaan be their servant, he was actually being very precise; Canaan would not personally be the servant of Japheth or of Shem, but he progeny would spend many years in various forms of slavery to the progeny of his uncles. *Persuaded* is the Hebrew word *pâthâh* (פָּתָה) [pronounced *paw-thaw'*] and it is in the Hiphil imperfect, which is causative action. God causes Japheth to be persuaded. In the NASB and the KJV, this word is translated to be *enlarged*, but that meaning does not appear to be in Brown-Driver-Briggs. The word can mean

to be used to mean *deceived* or *persuaded*. The latter definition appears to be the most apt here. *The tents of Shem* refers to blessing and prosperity in the spiritual and physical realm. For the next two millenniums, the Jews would be blessed through their association with Yahweh Elohim, the God of the Universe. The Gentiles that would be blessed were those Gentiles who followed the spiritual lead of the born-again Jews. When a Gentile recognized the power and efficacy of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then he often chose to become a Jew. In this way, he dwelt in the tents of Shem and was blessed because of that. It was the convincing or persuading ministry of God the Holy Spirit which made him realize his need and his lack.

**And Noah lived 350 years after the flood so that all the days of Noah were 950 years and he died.**

[Gen. 9:28–29]

If we follow Noah's post deluvian life, we see that he lived through to see 10 generations and he saw many of his grand children and great grandchildren die before he did. Noah lived to see his most important descendant up until that time: Abram. And just as inbreeding today causes some serious physical problems and limits life expectancy, we will see that the inbreeding with in Noah's own line caused a rapid decrease in the ages of all of his descendants.

---

---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---



**Genesis 10** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 10

### Genesis 10:1–32

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

**Introduction:** In my younger years, during the many times which I began to read the Bible, I would often skim over chapters like chapter 10. Occasionally I would wonder why these chapters were found in the Bible.

Let me quote from Scofield: *This chapter contains the earliest ethnological table in the literature of the ancient world, compiled centuries before the Homeric writings. In this table of nations there is a remarkable perception of the ethnic and linguistic situation of the age of Noah and his descendants. Virtually all the names here have been found in archaeological discoveries of the past century.*<sup>39</sup>

There are two possibilities for authors here: Noah, recording the generations which follow him (as he lived to see Abram) or Shem (who also lived to see Abram). Gen. 10:1a ([And these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.](#) LTHB) and Gen. 11:10a ([These are the generations of Shem.](#) LTHB) both begin with a genealogy, which could signify the change of authors (Noah followed by Shem; or Shem followed by Abraham). Many believe that the book of Genesis has had several authors [see [Authorship](#) in the [Introduction to the Book of Genesis](#) ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))]. It is possible the Noah wrote most of Genesis 10 and that Shem wrote much of Gen. 11; or, it is even more likely that Shem recorded Gen. 10 and Abraham recorded Gen. 11. As has been mentioned previously, I do not mean that they necessarily wrote anything down, but that they committed this genealogical lines to memory and passed them along. I do not say this dogmatically, as authorship here is simply speculation, but it is more reasonable for Shem and Abraham to be the authors rather than Moses. In any case, as R. B. Thieme, Jr. would always say, *It is not the man but the message which is important.* Authorship of a portion of God's Word is a matter of interest and sometimes is helpful in terms of isagogics; however, what is recorded in God's Word is what is important.

[And These the Generations \[or, the Beginnings\] of the Sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. And Sons Were Born to Them After the Flood:](#) [Gen. 10:1]

This first verse is a title for what is to come, The first phrase is a series of nouns, conjunctions and an adjective; there are no verbs. We do not have a verb until the verb for *born* which occurs at the end of the verse. It is in the Niphal imperfect—that is a passive stem—and it can function as an adjective in that respect. The action can be in progress at the time of writing, and, in this case, it is still in progress. The generations of these three continue until today.

There has been a lot of speculation concerning these lines—that there has been some skipping of several generations. There would be two reasons for this. If a line is mentioned in retrospect, perhaps the more well-known of the ancestral line are mentioned. However, when the lines are recorded by a contemporary, recall that in early history, men lived for a long time and they might live with their grandsons, and great grandsons in a way which would be not unlike living with one's son. This also would be a very likely reason for ancestral worship or ancestral veneration (which has found its way into several cultures) because the oldest living ancestor would date back several generations and have a very good perspective of life. That being said, there is no reason to suppose

<sup>39</sup> *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York-Oxford University Press; p. 15 (footnote).

that this occurred continually in each line of descendants recorded. There are some definite instances of it in the NT genealogies and in the 1Chronicles take on these genealogies; but that does not mean that we should read several generations between each *father* and *son*. That has come about because it is wrongly presumed that man dates back a million years in time and this would be a way to slip in a few additional years. However, that is not necessarily so (in fact it is very doubtful) and, as I have pointed out before, mathematically ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)), the population of the earth today does not put the flood and the repopulating of the earth too far back. Estimates of 5-6000 years ago are reasonable and, 15,000 years ago is probably too far back.

**The Sons of Japheth: Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras.**  
[Gen. 10:2]

*Chris* is a pleasant name for a male or a female. *Gomer* is also a male or a female name, although it would not be my first choice for anyone that I liked. Historians have determined that his progeny are the Cimmerians (the Akkadian name is *gimmirrai* and the Greek is *Kimmerioi*) and the Cimbri, from who come the Celts. For awhile, they occupied Southern Russia and were forced out by the Scythians and they moved into Asia Minor at the end of the 8th century B.C. In the 7th century B.C., they conquered Urartus, Phrygia and Lydia and battled Greek cities on the West Coast. The Scythians that they did battle with are probably descended from Magog, his brother (according to Josephus). They occupied the territory North of the Black Sea, which would put them in Western Russia and Poland. Magog figures into prophecy quite heavily in Ezek. 38:2 39:6 and Rev. 20:8.

From Madai comes one of the most famous of the ancient peoples: the Medes. They are Indo-European peoples who populated northwestern Iran and were later absorbed by the Persians. Except for words of theirs taken by other nations, their language has disappeared in antiquity and the records of their distribution are found in the documents of Assyrian rulers who fought against them. It appears that they might have been allied with the Cimmerians and protected from the Scythians in that alliance.

Javan is the Jewish word for *Greeks*. Javan's famous descendants include the Ionians, who lived in the West Coast of Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia and Syria. Isaiah (in Isa. 66:19) associates Javan with the far-off nations to whom Yahweh's messengers will be dispatched. This associates him with the far-western nations with respect to the Jews at that time. Ezekiel tells us that Javan contributed to the wealth of Tyre (Ezek. 27:13). Daniel associates Javan with Alexander's Greco-Macedonian empire.

Tubal is mentioned several times throughout the Bible and his descendants are thought to have populated the area south of the Black Sea, in what is today Turkey, but then it was called southern Anatolia. The Assyrian empire began to expand to the North and East and began to be in conflict with the tribes of Anatolia from the rise of Ashurnasirpal (circa 870 B.C.) to onslaught of the Scythians in 679 B.C. Their strength and tenacity in battle is shown by resisting these forces for several centuries, remaining in continual, bitter conflict with the Assyrians. The Bible ascribes to Tubal the trading of slaves and metals.

Meshech is often mentioned in conjunction with Tubal and Magog in Biblical and secular literature alike. Some believe that they were Indo-European peoples who populated central Asia Minor, but were later pushed by their enemies southeast of the Black Sea. Many think that these three are the source of the modern Russians. Ezekiel refers to them as traders of slaves and bronze (Ezek. 27:13); when castigating Egypt, Ezekiel tells them that they will inhabit Sheol with uncircumcised barbarians like Meshech and Tubal (Ezek. 32:26); they are grouped again with Tubal in Ezek. 38 and 39 as the anti-God forces from the land of Magog.

Tiras is thought to be the progenitor of the Thracians, and later the Tyrsenoi, a people which occupied the coastal area of the Aegean Sea. There is some disagreement here and others see them as being related to Tarsus and Tarshish and possibly as the ancestor of the Etruscans.

**The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah.** [Gen. 10:3]

Ashkenaz apparently did not stray too far. According to Jer. 51:27, they lived in Ararat and Armenia during Jeremiah's time. Extra-Biblical Jewish literature indicates that Ashkenaz later became a synonym for Germany.

Just as Jews in Spain and Portugal were called Sephartic Jews, Jews in Germany were called Ashkenazim. According to the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia* they likely became the Scythians who were allied with the Mannans in battle against the Assyrians. Their name became a synonym for Barbarian as they were a *crude and warlike people*<sup>40</sup> who caused unrest in the Assyrian empire. Herodotus recorded their conquest of the Cimmerians (Gomer).

The parallel passage in 1Chronicles calls *Riphath, Diphath*. In Hebrew, this is an *R*: ר and this is a *D*: ד. There is obviously very little difference. Why wasn't this error caught? The Scribe who copied Genesis is not necessarily the same Scribe who copied 1Chronicles; even if it was, they would likely not have caught the error that they made. Any Scribe who caught the error later was not permitted to change it. However, we do have several manuscripts plus the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate which read *Riphath* in both passages. Scofield notes that Riphath and Togarmah were both inhabitants of Asia Minor. The ZPEB gives several possibilities, identifying them with the Ripheean mountains and the river Rhebas in Bithynia and with the Rhibii, a people who lived eastward of the Caspian Sea which would be in Southern Russia. All of these could be true as it is not necessary for a family to all remain in the same geographical area for the rest of their lives. Certainly there are groups who break off and others who intermarry. What we are examining is general trends.

Togarmah is described by Ezekiel as a nation which traded with Tyre, providing them with Mules, horses and horsemen (Ezek. 27:14). They are called allies of Magog and associated with Gomer, Persia, Cush and Put in Ezek. 38:6. Josephus believed them to be the Phrygians but Assyrian inscriptions refer to a Til-garimmu (*Tegarama* in Hittite) which could refer to Togarmah. That city was in East Cappadocia, so this would place them possibly North of Palestine and southeast of the Black Sea. This city was destroyed by the Assyrians in 695 B.C.

**And the sons of Javan: Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.** [Gen. 10:4]

Josephus identified Elishah with the Æolians, a Greek peoples and others have associated them with Carthage, a nation in Northern Africa because the name of the Tyrian princess who, according to tradition, founded Carthage had a similar name: *Elissa*. The ZPEB concludes that due to their supplying purple dyes to the Tyrians and their association with Greece and Kittam, they were likely the inhabitants of islands out in the Aegean Sea or of Sicily and Southern Italy.

Tarshish was the name of a city in the West Mediterranean region near Gibraltar in Spain and it is likely equivalent to Tartessus, where Jonah fled when he was told to evangelize Nineveh. They could have also been associated with sea ports around southwestern Italy as Tarshish is closely associated with sea vessels and sea ports. This reputation would have allowed them to occupy a spread-out area like this. When Tarshish is used in connection with ships, it likely does not refer to a geographical origin or destination but to the ships themselves; their large size and sea worthiness.

Kittim is associated with the Island of Cyprus, which Herodotus claims was colonized by the Phœnicians (Shem), the Ethiopians (Ham) and the Greeks (Japheth), which is not unlike what happened on the Isle of Crete. Josephus ties Kittam to a city on the southeast coast of Cyprus, Citium. Jeremiah uses Kittam to refer to generally the seafaring West which would exert dominance over the East. Daniel's reference to the ships of Kittam could refer to the Romans who defeated Antiochus Epiphanes in Egypt in 169 B.C. In fact, the Septuagint, instead of reading *ships of Kittam* reads *Romans*. The Apocryphal and Pseudopigraphal literature associate Kittam with the Grecian empire.

Dodanim could very likely be Rodanim (as it is rendered in 1Chron. 1:7), in which case they are associated with the inhabitants of the island of Rhodes in the Aegean Sea, right off the coast of Turkey, a stepping stone to Crete and the Mediterranean Sea. If *Dodanim* is the correct rendering, then we have no idea as to who these people are.

---

<sup>40</sup> The *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia* Vol. 1 p. 356

**From these were dispersed the inhabitants of the borders [or, the coastlines] of the nations in their lands each with his own language by their families in their nations. [Gen. 10:5]**

This indicates that the writer of this is recording this information after the Tower of Babel and the confusion of the languages in Gen. 11. This also shows that the distribution of languages was not arbitrary, but God gave each family their own language, so that it would be natural to move off in a group of those they had been raised with, were kin to and who spoke the same language.

The word translated twice as *nations* is the Hebrew word *gôy* (גוֹי) [pronounced *GOH-ee*] which most of us recognize as Gentiles. It can refer to a community, a nation or a group of peoples. This is generally, but not always,<sup>41</sup> a word for those who are not Jewish in the Bible and this is its first occurrence.

*Borders [or, coastlines]* is the Hebrew word *'iy* (אֵי) [pronounced *ee*] and it refers to islands, to coast lands and to regions bordered by coast lands (the are seen from the perspective of the person in the water). As you have no doubt noticed, all of these peoples seemed to be associated with islands or with the various seas.

**And the sons of Ham: Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. [Gen. 10:6]**

Cush is translated variously as *Ethiopia*, *Cush*, *Cushi* and *Cushite* (it is all the same word). Ethiopia is south of Egypt, off the Red Sea. They appear to be associated with Egypt circa the twentieth century BECAUSE, but later became independent from the Egyptians around 1000 B.C. A few centuries later, they ruled over Egypt and had prepared to do battle with Hezekiah, but they were driven off by the Assyrians in the late 7th century B.C.

Mizraim is Hebrew for Egypt and is translated that way in the RSV.

Josephus claims that Put was the founder of Libya and that the first inhabitants are called the Putites. Put has quite the varied future. Isaiah said that Put (and Tarshish and Lud) would one day here the glory of God in Isa. 64:19. Jeremiah groups Put with Ethiopia and Lud as nations whose warriors would be used in the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 46:9) Ezekiel, on the other hand, both mentions that Put contributed to the wealth of Tyre (Ezek. 27:10) and as a nation which will fall by the sword (Ezek. 30:5). She is grouped with other nations as an object of God's wrath (Ezek. 38:5) and with nations which supported Nineveh (Nahum 3:6–9).

Canaan occupied the promised land before the Jews did and is the source of many peoples who were antagonistic toward the Jews. Now would be a good time to examine **the doctrine of the Canaanites (not finished yet !!)**.

**And the sons of Cush: Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. [Gen. 10:7]**

Seba is a land and a people in Southern Arabia. Some have thought them to be equivalent to Sheba, since the difference between the names is a small dot; but this would not make any sense to list the same person twice. They may have stayed together as brothers and founded, for all intents and purposes, one nation or people. Psalm 72:10 mentions them together. God spoke through Isaiah, saying, "**For I the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have Egypt as your ransom; Ethiopia and Seba for you.**" (Isa. 43:3) Isaiah also indicates that the Sabeans would come to Israel, recognizing the God of Israel is the only God (Isa. 45:14).

Havilah is likely located in the Western portion of Arabia, just North of Yemen. This son of Cush likely received his name after the land mentioned in or near the garden of Eden. Let me quote from ZPEB: *Many regard this Havilah of Arabia and that of the Garden of Eden story as two different places.* Duh.

Sabta is thought to be a place in Arabia on or near the East coast. Sabteca is thought to be by some a scribal error for Sabtah, but this would not make any sense to name the same group twice. They are associated with Southern Arabia.

---

<sup>41</sup> Ex. 35:10, 19:6 and 33:13.

Raamah was probably located in Arabia, but exactly where is disputed. They traded with Tyre as did Sheba (Ezek. 27:22).

Since there are other Sheba's in the Bible (Abraham's grandson and a decedent of Joktan), it is hard to identify which is which. Some have even suggested that there had been a blending of the Semitic and Hamitic tribes, which is possible. Whereas some authorities are not sure whether this could refer to one, two or three people, I do not find it difficult to imagine that some kids just got the same name and some families have two children with the same names (Sheba and Dedan were both sons of Raamah and Sheba and Dedan were both sons of Jokshan, a descendant of Abraham). Sheba was a country in Southwest Arabia, where Yemen is today. Camel caravans from Sheba are mentioned twice: once in Job 6:19 and also in 1Kings 10:1–13 (the latter is in connection to the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon). Which Sheba populated this area is not known, but I would think the grandson of Cush.

**And Cush sired Nimrod and he began to be a mighty [possibly, audacious and bold] [man] on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before (the face of) the Lord; therefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before (the face of) the Lord.** [Gen. 10:8–9]

Suddenly we have a break in the mood. Throughout this genealogy, there have been a dearth of verbs, with the exception of v. 5. What was written was as little as possible. This particular author did not care for genealogies either yet had to record them, so he recorded as little as possible. The second verb in this verse is the Hiphil perfect of the most unusual verb *châlal* (חָלַל) [pronounced *chaw-LAWL*]. It is unusual, not because it is rarely found but because it has such a variety of meanings. In Ezekiel, it is used several times in conjunction with God's name—it means *to profane* His name. It can mean *to defile* or *to pollute* (see Gen. 49:4 Lev. 19:29 1Chron. 5:1). However, in Gen. 4:26 6:1 9:20 11:6 41:54 and in many other places, it means *to begin*. This use of *châlal* is always in the Hiphil or the Hophal (although its use in conjunction with profanity is also found in the Hiphil). My first thought is *could there a way to integrate these meanings?* This would change a great many translations severely; such as Gen. 4:26 could mean, *It was then that man began to profane the name of God.* However, this would be misplaced as the line being examined in context is Seth's, the line of our Lord; the verb for *to call* is used consistently in a good sense. I do not find it used in conjunction with taking God's name in vain. The Hiphil is the causative stem, yet it can assume a reflexive meaning. The object of the verb can participate in the action as a second subject. The emphasis is upon the causing of the action rather than on the result of the action. The perfect tense means a completed action at the time of the writing; or an action looked upon as complete by the writer and reader. Then we have the infinitive of the verb *to be* and Nimrod was the first to be known as *mighty, strong, valiant*. The perfect action of this verb means that Nimrod was recognized as having accomplished a certain reputation or sphere of might at the time of writing.

Prior to the flood, man did not eat meat; man farmed or man was a shepherd (although professions were more diverse than those two). After the flood, animals began to fear man on the earth; therefore, their ferocity increased as they were associated less and less with man; and, whereas Noah began to be a farmer upon the earth, Nimrod began to be a hunter. This is a brand new profession and Nimrod was renown for this profession. *Before Yahweh* is probably a neutral expression. God figured into the thinking of some of the inhabitants of the earth; Nimrod had achieved this fame as a great hunter and the fame is emphasized by using God's name. He is not just a great hunter, but a great hunter before God. He was the measuring rod by which all other hunters were measured. If someone was mentioned as being a great hunter, it would be said he was a mighty hunter before the Lord just as Nimrod was.

**So the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon and Erech and Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar.** [Gen. 10:10]

Nimrod, in order to be a hunter, had to do a great deal of traveling and apparently what he would do is hunt throughout a certain area, found a city, and then move on to another city. He seems to be the first person infected with wanderlust. I'll wait until chapter 11 to cover Babylon. Erech is a city just down the Euphrates a ways from Babylon. This city is also found on the Sumerian king list. One of the kings was Gilgamesh, who was a hero of Sumerian legends.

We do not know where the city Accad was located, but we have extra-Biblical documentation that as early as 2350 B.C. there was a dynasty there founded by Sargon (which means *true king*). During this time period, Accad controlled all of Sumer (Southern Babylon) and it had armies stationed as far away as Elam, Syria and southern Anatolia. This dynasty lasted two centuries and became known to the Babylonians as the ideal kingdom, a *golden age* if you will; or the *good old days*. Accad later became the designation for northern Babylonia and the word Accadian today is applied to the language of Babylonia and not to its speakers.

We are unsure about Calneh; the original Hebrew was consonants only with no spaces between the words; the vowel points were added sometime later. A different set of vowel points changes *Calneh* to *all of them*. So the sense of this verse could be that all of these cities were in the land of Shinar. We do find a city of Calneh in Amos 6:2 and a similarly named city in Isaiah 10:9 (Calno).

Scholarship seems to support that Shinar is equivalent to Babylonia in designation or area. Shinar was probably the first designation of the area of these three or four cities and later, due to the prominence of Babylon, the area took on the name of Babylonia. There is not an undisputed corresponding word for Shinar found in extra-Biblical literature, however. The Bible continues to use the term *Shinar* in several instances (Gen. 14:1 Joshua 7:21 Isa. 11:11 Dan. 1:2 Zech. 5:11).

**From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah; and Resen between Ninevah and Calah, this is the great city.** [Gen. 10:11–12]

There is a difference of opinion as to the translation at this point. It is unclear as to whether it should read *from this land went Asshur and he built Nineveh* or *from this land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh...* Asshur, we later find out, is the son of Shem. If this written by Noah or Shem, then it is reasonable to, out of the blue, name Asshur, someone who has not come into this context yet. This does occur in Scripture. Contextually, it seems to make more sense that we are speaking of Nimrod rather than of the area near Babylon. On the other hand, it would be likely that Asshur (Assyrian) would found Assyrian cities. Age and stated modus operandi would favor Nimrod as the founder and builder of those cities.

It is reasonable to assume that Nimrod then moves northwest into Assyria and, as before, hunts over a great area and founds cities near this area. He originally traveled down the Euphrates and then he moved up the Tigris river. He apparently would found a city and then hunt throughout the adjoining area. For that reason, the area adjacent to Assyria is called the land of Nimrod in Mic. 5:6. His name is used to designate at least two cities: Birs Nimrud, which is south-west of Babylon, and Nimrod in Assyria. He is found in Sumerian, Assyrian and other extra-Biblical documents and has been identified by some scholars as perhaps Gilgamesh or Sargon of Agade. There is no reason for that, however. It is likely that he would found these cities, remain for a century or so, and move on. By examining Shem's line in chapter 11, we see that immediately after the flood, people lived for five hundred years on the average; including those of Nimrod's generation. Since Noah lived 950 years, it would not be out of the question for Nimrod to have lived that long. Being a man struck with wanderlust, it would not be surprising that he would move from place to place, possibly with a different wife (or, wives) and found a city with his progeny.

Nimrod stopped and founded two of the most famous cities of the ancient world: Babylon and Ninevah. Ninevah, now in ruins, will figure prominently (as will Babylon) into Israel's future history. See R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s *The Worm and the Gourd* (now out of print) or Henry Hastings **study** of the book of Jonah.

Rehoboth-Ir and Resen are cities both lost to history, even though Resen was obviously a very famous city at one time and the most prominent of the cities named at the time of writing. It is supposed that Calah is 24 miles south of Nineveh on the Tigris river and it has been rebuilt several times since then.

**And Mizraim sired Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim and Pathrusim and Casluhim and (from which came the Philistines) Caphtorim.** [Gen. 10:13–14]

All the names are have the *im* plural ending. Since we know *sired* or *became the father of* is not a literal father, my guess is that from this person came several famous tribes of peoples (famous in those days) although the

ancestor of each tribe was not necessarily Mizraim's son. In fact, Mizraim's name is plural, so he could have named all of his children in the plural. However, it is clear that from Ham came Mizraim and through Mizraim, we either have several peoples or several individuals.

Ludim is not Lud, the son of Shem, and his place in history, along with Anamim and Naphtuhim, are unknown. Some scholars believe that Lubim should be Libya, others claim that we do not know at this time who they are or who they became. The Pathrusim belong to upper Egypt (they are the people of Pathros). At the end of the verse, I changed the word order from the Hebrew to give the proper sense to the end of the verse. The Philistines are related to Caphtorim, so I placed the *and*, which goes with Caphtorim, before the Philistine phrase (see Deut. 2:23 Amos 9:7). It is generally agreed that this phrase became misplaced.

**And Canaan sired Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward, the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.** [Gen. 10:15–18]

Sidon and Heth are the sons of Canaan and the others which follow are the various tribes which eventually populated Canaan. Sidon is not spoken of as an individual or as the head of a tribe again (except in the 1Chronicles list), but the city he gave his name to is mentioned throughout the Bible. It was once the capitol of ancient Phœnicia. From Heth came the Hittites. The Hittites lived in the land of Canaan. Esau's wives are said to have been the daughters of Heth and Jacob was warned by Rebekah against marrying the daughters of Heth (Gen. 27:46). My maps place them in southern Turkey as well.

The last two verses indicate that this was written by someone who lived to see these tribes gain some prominence, or, when this was copied in the future, the copyist, possibly Shem, Moses or Abraham, added vv. 16–19. My educated guess is that Noah wrote these basic records down and Shem later added to them. Gen. 10:32 and the contents of this chapter make me think that Noah, as a doting mega-grandfather, wrote this information down, following his progeny as far as he could. Shem, who lived another 150 years past his father Noah, during his last years on earth, became the doting Patriarch, and copied what his father had written, adding a phrase here and there; deciding that it was necessary to understand Gen. 10:5, so he explained what occurred at the tower of Babel in Gen. 11. One of his progeny likely picked up either at the beginning of chapter 11 or mid-chapter 11 with the genealogy and narrative.

See <http://christiananswers.net/q-aig/race-skincolor.html> about how the races came about from Babel.

The Jebusites lived in the hills surrounding Jerusalem. Jebus, later called Jerusalem, was their main city and Jebusite is first used of the present occupants of that area (Gen. 15:21 Ex. 3:8) and then of the former occupants of that area (Ezek. 16:3, 45 Zech. 9:7). No one could drive them out of this area for centuries, so they lived side-by-side the Israelites (Joshua 15:63 Judges 1:21). David finally conquered this city, making it his own. He either restored the name of Jerusalem or the author of *Judges* (or an editor of *Judges*), inserted its name in Judges 19:10.

The Amorites lived scattered about the hills surrounding the Jordan. They occupied a large enough territory and exerted enough influence to have their name used as a general term for those who lived in Canaan (Gen. 15:16 48:22 Joshua 24:15). Ezekiel described Jerusalem as the offspring of the Amorite and the Hittite (Ezek. 16:3, 45). The difference between the two might be a northern and a southern area of occupation. Their leaders (Gen. 14:13 Num. 21:21 Deut. 31:4), their stature (Amos 2:9) and their gods (Joshua 24:15 Judges 6:10) are all mentioned in Scripture. They have a rich, extra-Biblical history (see **the Doctrine of the Amorite--not finished**).

The Girgashites have been associated by some with the city Karkisha, found in the cuneiform Hittite texts, but this is not an historical certainty. Israel did defeat them in Deut. 7:1 Joshua 3:10 24:11.

The Hivites lived in the hills of Lebanon (Gen. 10:17 Judges. 3:3) and the Hermon range to the valley which leads to Hamath (Joshua 6:3). They occupied this territory even until the time of David (2Sam. 24:7). They are more

closely associated with the Arkites than the other tribes mentioned. It is quite likely that these are also known as the Horites, the mixup being due to a scribal error. Gen. 36:2,20–30 are cited to prove this (Zibeon is called both a Hivite and a Horite). The original difference between the words is vav (waw), ו, and resh, ר, so it is easy to see how a scribal error could have been made. Gen. 34:2 and Joshua 9:7 have various readings of Hittite, Hivite and Horite.

The Arkite inhabited, of all places, the town of Arka (presently, it is Tell 'Arqa, four miles from the sea and 12 miles northeast of Tripolis, Syria. The city is found in the Assyrian inscriptions under the name Irkatah, described by both Shalmaneser II and Tiglath-pileser II as rebellious.

Arvad (called Ruâd today) was the northern most Phœnician city, is an island two miles off the coast of Syria (which was ancient Phœnicia) opposite Cypress approximately 50 miles north of Byblos. Despite its diminutive size (less than a mile in circumference),<sup>42</sup> it was heavily fortified and they ruled over some a great deal of the neighboring coast. This city maintained its independence up until the 9th century BECAUSE when it was under Tyre's control during the time of Ezekiel (who mentions it in Ezek. 27:8, 11).

Except for the parallel passage in 1Chronicles, the Sinites and the Hamathites are never mentioned again. The Sinites have been variously associated with Sinna on Mount Lebanon (Strabo notes this). We find that their name may have survived in the names Nahr as-Sinn and Sinn addarb and might be related to other peoples in secular history.

The Zemarites likely lived in northern Phœnicia, between Arvad and Tripolis in what is now called Sumra (called Sumur in the Tell el-Amarna letters and Simirra in the Assyrian texts).

**And the territory of the Canaanite was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. [Gen. 10:19]**

This description allows us to know when this was written; or at least to set some time boundaries. Sodom and Gomorrah were still cities and the Hittites had not moved nor had the been pushed too far north. We find Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned in Abram's time, and they were obviously well-established by that time. The first and third cities are on the coast of the Mediterranean, and the latter five are the cities of the plain, some possibly beneath the Dead Sea today. This area is basically the promised land, but smaller. Had Moses been the original author, then he would not have referred to the latter five cities because they would not have existed during his time. Some time would have to pass after Canaan to allow for the movement of the families. However, our concept of a city and their concept of a city would be quite different. Their city could consist of one main family and 3-6 generations of descendants.

**These are the sons of Ham according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations. [Gen. 10:20]**

As in v. 5, this passage tells us that this chapter was written after the chapter 11 occurred (not necessarily after chapter 11 was written, however). The author knew very little about Japheth, therefore the passage concerning his progeny is short and without verbs. Those descended from Ham had made quite a mark in the world and the author spent a lot of time with them. The different construction beginning v. 21 might indicate that Shem is the author, or a descendant of Shem's.

**And also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the older brother of Japheth, children were born. [Gen. 10:21]**

This verse clearly tells us that *father* does not mean *father* as we understand it, but ancestor. This does not alter the ages or the succession of generations given in Ge. 5:3–32 or 11:10–26. It does not indicate the relative age of Ham either; so it has been supposed that Ham is the second oldest brother.

---

<sup>42</sup> Could it be that small? ZPEB, vol. 1, p. 342



### **The sons of Shem: Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram.** [Gen. 10:22]

The land of Elam is in between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea. They are non-Semitic Caucasians and their earliest appearance in secular history is approximately 2450 B.C. Their succession of rulers happened to be very peculiar to man: the throne was hereditary through women so that the new ruler was a son of a sister of a member of the previous ruler's family. Like most nations, they enjoyed periods of independence and periods of being dominated. Ezekiel has prophesied that they will drink from the cup of the wrath of God. The book of *Esther* takes place in Susa, a capitol of Elam during the rulership of Ahasuerus the Persian.

Asshur, son of Shem, is the progenitor of the Assyrians. It is possible that the translation of Gen. 10:11 is Asshur going forth and establishing cities. The segue is that Nimrod is founding cities and so is Asshur. However, nowhere else do we show, in this chapter, of people from one line, cropping up in the middle of another genealogy. The city of Asshur and the name Assyria may have come from Asshur and it may have been taken from their god Ashur. This name occurs in several personal names, so the relationship is unclear. There could even be some ancestor worship involved. Asshur, or Assyria, is north-northwest of Babylon. There is no reason to assume that there is some kind of a mistake here, as this all occurs within the same chapter within about 10 verses of one another. The problem is this: it appears as if Nimrod (in the line of Ham) establishes the city Asshur (and possibly even names one of his children Asshur). But Asshur, the son of Shem, is closely associated with this city as well; and the Assyrians are certainly believed to be a Semitic people. It is not impossible to come up with a possible explanation for this. Asshur heard of a city with his name and simply went there and conquered it. We do not know when such things began to happen (although Gen. 14 will suggest that this has been occurring over a long period of time, as it presumes previous military engagements).

Arpachshad was the son born to Shem two years following the flood. There are only guesses as to his descendants and geography. Even the Chaldeans have been suggested as his progeny.

Lud is quite similar to Ludim but they are different people. Lud is most likely associated with Lydia. Josephus and philology back this up.

There is much more covered in the more updated Genesis study.

---

## **Internal Links**

**[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)**

**[External Links](#)**

**[Genesis Chapter Links](#)**

---

**Genesis 11** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

# Genesis 11

## Genesis 11:1–9

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

- v. 4 [What is the problem with this tower?](#)
- v. 10 [Traditional View of the Ages](#)
- v. 16 [Explaining the Age Decline](#)
- v. 26 [The Meaning of the Names in Abram's Line](#)
- v. 27 [Why Historical Dates are Difficult to Calculate](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 11 is set in two parts; the first explains the separation of nations and peoples, which occurred before most of chapter 10. The second half of chapter 11 deals with the descendants of Shem. It is my opinion that Abram wrote this and the following several chapters of Genesis.

Gen. 10:32 behaves as pretty much a period at the end of chapter 10, and likely to that author's work (Noah or Shem), but chapter 11 picks up with the tower of Babel, a popular term, not found in the Bible.

**Now the whole earth was one language [lit., one lip] and one vocabulary, and it came about as they journeyed from east and they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.**

[Gen. 11:1–2]

The early population was not going to settle in the mountains, and not knowing which way to go, headed west, following the sun. They had no reason to separate from one another. *They journeyed from the east* could also be rendered as *they brake away onwards* and the word means *to pull up* as one would pluck up tent pins.

Given thousands of years, two groups of people with a common language will develop an entirely different dialect. However, we are speaking of only a few generations from Noah. Therefore, what occurs in this chapter would have to be miraculous (assuming that it is true, which I do).

Only three generations of Japheth are mentioned, but it is likely that several generations could have been skipped, since there was no specific information on these groups in this portion of Scripture. Only three generations of Ham's line are traced, but there is a bit more detail. However, Shem's line is followed linearly, as if the author is going somewhere with it.

By comparing Gen. 10:25a (**To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided**) with the years given in Gen. 11:10–17, we find that this incident occurred 101 years<sup>43</sup> after the flood, three generations into each line (it appears as though a generation during that time was every thirty years). In either case, Noah would have died by this time.

Being a number's person, I find that it would be interesting to calculate the number of people alive at that time. We begin with eight people and it does not appear that Noah had any other children (Gen. 9:19) and, whereas 7 males born to a family does not seem unusual (Gen. 10:2), 13 males born to a family does (Gen. 10:26–29). Assuming an equal number of daughters and sons, the average family probably produced about 14 offspring.

<sup>43</sup> Or 137 years if Cainan is taken into consideration.

while the parents were between ages 25–50 (reasonable child bearing years). This gives us approximately 42 children in the first generation, all of whom are child-bearing age prior to the confusion of languages, which is 21 families all capable of producing another generation of adults prior to this incident. Which is close to 600 adults from that generation. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, there would have been 12,600 children, and in the 4<sup>th</sup> generation,<sup>44</sup> a quarter of a million people. So there could have easily been a quarter of a million people alive during the confusion of languages (this is assuming that the chronology given in the latter portion of this chapter is correct as per the copyists).

Since the Exodus generation was at least two million and they traveled together, then it is likely that this group traveled together out of the mountains to find a river for water and then they all likely settled down together. The original three patriarchs (and wives) had all seen the flood and would have been alive during the confusion of the languages. We know that God had spoken to Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:1), and given that there is no description given as to the manner in which God spoke to them, it is reasonable to suppose that God took on the form of a man and spoke to them.

The next few generations would have been told stories about the antediluvian world and the interaction between the fallen angels and mankind; such stories would have made wonderful bedtime stories, from a secular point of view. However, as a logical result of this, there are a great many adults on the earth who do not believe in the Revealed Lord, but who have an interest in the gods of the antediluvian era (the fallen angels and their children the daughters of men bare to them) and that this group of people became possibly very religious, but not believers. Furthermore, they were highly intelligent, as was early man (archeological discoveries aside; place a quarter million geniuses on an island with only natural materials and what they will develop will require great thought, but it might appear primitive.

**And they said to one another, "Come let us make bricks and fire [them] thoroughly." And they used brick for stone and, for them, bitumen was for mortar. [Gen. 11:3]**

They obviously found that firing bricks made the bricks stronger. We do not know exactly what was used for mortar, but it was some kind of asphalt, also used in the sealing of the ark that Moses traveled in (Ex. 2:3) but not used to seal Noah's ark.

**And they said, "Come let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top in the heavens and let us make for ourselves a name; so that we are not scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." [Gen. 11:4]**

The narrative tells us that man is building this city and this tower, and that God doesn't like it, so why exactly is that true?

### What is the problem with this tower?

- The average reader has no concept of what is occurring here. God has mandated that man fill to the earth (Gen. 1:28 9:1). They are choosing to remain in one place.
- Instead of building an altar to God, as did Noah (Gen. 8:20–21), they built a monument to themselves (Gen. 11:4). Therefore, they were glorifying themselves, not God.
- The tower references heaven rather than God. Controlling the vocabulary means that you can control the thinking of a people.
- Often towers were built for pagan deity worship; archeology has discovered in Mesopotamia terraced towers, ziggurats, designed for that purpose. It is very likely that they had this in mind to worship the deities of the antediluvian era.
- Why does this tower have to reach into the heavens? This is so they have a place to flee in case there is another flood, which God has promised them that there would not be. They are building this because they do not believe God's Word.

<sup>44</sup> This would be adding in Cainan as another generation.

## What is the problem with this tower?

- ❑ It would be God Who would direct man's movements, if they so chose; so it would be God Who would direct some of them to His geographical will, which may not be in that city. However, regardless of what God's plan is, they chose to remain there.

Despite the sparseness of this narrative, we can get a good idea as to the thinking of mankind.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people and they all have one lip. And this is what they have begun to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be withheld from them."**  
[Gen. 11:5–6]

We have seen that, separating into nations, it has taken us several millenniums to create some of the incredible technology that we have created. For a great deal of time, we spread ourselves throughout the earth and battled for our territory and worked for our sustenance, so that there was not as much time for technological advance or for self-exaltation. In the past several decades, we have seen incredible advances in scientific development and much of that has been dependant upon the cooperative interaction of various nations. This has not been God's plan for us until now.

**"Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language [lit., lip], that they may not understand one another's speech [lit., lip]" So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.** [Gen. 11:7–8]

God could have chosen to do whatever He wanted to do. He chose, rather than to scatter men through natural disasters, to do it by language. In the midst of building this tower (quite a feat for 1–5 centuries past the flood with practically no developed technology), those building the tower could no longer communicate to one another. If you have ever been in a foreign land and no one around you speaks your language, and you suddenly meet someone who speaks English, there is an immediate bond which is formed. God confined these languages to the various families, as we see in Gen. 10:5 & 20. It is very likely that almost every person named in Gen. 10 had a different language. They found that they could communicate with one another in their family, but not with any of a dozen or two dozen families which lived around them. Certainly there were misunderstandings, misscommunications, and everyone thought that they were speaking in a language that they were born with. Adam was created with a fully functioning vocabulary. God did the same with these and created different patterns of language.

**Therefore its name was called Babel [or, Babylon] because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.** [Gen. 11:9]

Bâbel (בְּבֶלֶט) [pronounced *baw-BEHL*] is one of the very few words which has come down to us even in the English. This is one of the oldest words (if not the oldest) which is the same in English as it is in t It means *to confuse or to confound*. *Scatter* is in the Hiphil perfect, which is the causative stem; God did not physically pick anyone up and move them; that would be the simple Qal stem. God, by confusing their language caused them to be scattered. The perfect tense means that this is written from the standpoint of completed action.

## Genesis 11:10–32

**Preface: Archeology and the Bible:** It is important that we have some kind of an idea as to what life was like during these times insofar as ancient history and archeology reveal to us. Due to preconceived ideas, most modern scholars see this period of time as being exceptionally primitive, which contradicts the Bible. We have

a change in the languages for a majority of the population of the earth, which would require a new written language for them.

We do not know when a written language was developed. My guess is, there was no written language until after the confusion of the languages, and here is why: the mind of Adam (and his early descendants) was so powerful that, they had no reason to write anything down. They heard something once and they remembered it.

At this point in science, we do not fully understand why we remember some things and forget others; why our brain prints and retains some information, and yet, other information seems to be printed and becomes almost immediately inaccessible (lack of short-term memory). Ideally speaking, our own minds seem as though they ought to keep all of our memories somewhere, which is why hypnotism is used to dredge up old memories. And for all of us, who meet a person and then, 2 seconds later, have forgotten that person's name, we know that sometimes information just does not seem to print at all.

Coming from the hand of God—and let me stress that this is a personal theory—early man's comprehension and memory was phenomenal, so that everything, or very nearly everything, that early man heard, he retained. For that reason, there was no need to write anything down.

As man degenerated physically, he also degenerated mentally, and a written language became a necessity. Since man needed a written language, he developed one. My guess is, this occurred after the flood and after the confusion of languages.

Some assumptions of archeology have remained unchanged since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was at that time that archeologists separated the earth into several layers representing various time periods and we have held to that model until this day even though it was made prior to carbon dating methods at a time when very little fossil evidence had been uncovered. It was at that time that ancient history was separated into three ages: the Stone Age (10,000–3200 B.C.), the Bronze Age (3200-1200 B.C.) and the Iron Age (1200–330 B.C.). For this reason, a lot of archeological finds are grouped into these preordained time periods. Only organic matter may be dated using C-14 dating methods and there is a dearth of organic matter to be found in Palestinian excavations. Therefore, a lot of dating is done by strata (that is, if it is found in a certain layer, then it is dated according to that layer). This is primarily true of dating layers of earth which is determined to be pre-man.

It is also possible that there have been some corruption of Biblical texts in regards to the years given. The years given in the Masoretic text are slightly different from those in the Greek text. Also, there is one name left out of Shem's line in the Massoretic text, which is found in the Greek text. It is, in part, for these reasons that it is difficult to correlate Biblical and archeological dates. Somewhere in the Middle Bronze Age (after 2300 B.C.) do we begin to see greater correlation between archeological dating and Biblical dates. The dates given for the Old Stone Age (also known as the Paleolithic Age) is based as more upon evolution and geological **theories** as it is upon sound archeological evidence. It is clear that there is no existing archeological evidence which requires us to go back further than 10,000 B.C.<sup>45</sup>

It is assumed by archeology, but not taught by the Bible, that earliest man primarily hunted and gathered food from nature. Their earliest implements were made of flint and chipped stone. This is what is known as the Paleolithic period. It is very likely that some groups from Gen. 11 functioned that way, but farming predates the flood and Noah was a farmer immediately after the flood, so there did exist some agrarian societies before and after the flood.

The second period of the Stone Age, the Mesolithic period, was, according to archeological assumptions when we first saw food-producing societies and real settlements. There certainly existed advances in the arts of civilization during this time. The Bible would group these two periods of time together.

---

<sup>45</sup> *The Bible Almanac*, p. 94

As Charles Clough points out, the original inhabitants of the ark emerged to a cruel world. Even though the antediluvian people were forbidden to enter into the garden of God, they still seemed to have a very moist, and comfortable climate with a great deal of vegetation. However, those in the ark emerged to a flood-ruined land with some, but very little vegetation. In fact, it was possibly due to the lack of vegetation that they were given permission to eat animals, as they had additional clean beasts on the ark.

The third part of the stone age is called the Neolithic period, which began about 5000 B.C., and it is at this point where the **interpretations** of archeological finds and the Bible fall into greater agreement. With all the clay available to the post-diluvian societies, and the lack of large trees, they made mud-brick shelters, which, after a few heavy rains, disintegrated to nothing. Charles Clough points out where archeology assumes that each stage of building these mud huts represents a century, the first few more than likely represent a decade or less for each layer of mud huts. Man certainly experimented and his first mud huts were worthless. Afterward, he learned to fire his clay bricks and to affix them with a mortar for a more permanent dwelling.

When Noah and his family came down from the mountains from the east and moved into the Euphrates valley, there would have been far more water on the ground and far more rain, and much more temperate weather as a result. In Gen. 11:1–4, man built a city with a great tower. There is no reason to think that, immediately upon leaving the mountains that they built successful buildings, but, given their age and intellect, within 100–200 years, they were probably building a city which could withstand heavy rains.

In archeological sites in Jericho (Jericho is in Israel; not in the Euphrates valley), we have four Neolithic periods; two which were pre-pottery and two which had pottery. This would correlate with eventually discovering how to fire bricks to make shelters which would withstand rain. With the first group in Jericho, we have found massive defensive walls which have been built. After this wall was destroyed (perhaps by invaders and likely by heavy rains), the second period of time still lacks the ability to make pottery, but they did make realistic portraits of human heads or skulls using clay for molding and shell inset for eyes. The next group in Jericho could make pottery. We do not know if these were new groups which supplanted to original peoples, or whether these ages represented technological advances.

It may occur to you, how can man successfully figure out how to build a city in Shinar (the Euphrates Valley), and then, hundreds of years later, experiment once again with building? Technology is built upon technology. There is not a person in the world today who could build, from raw materials, an airplane, a car or a computer. When man dispersed, some families had some knowledge of this; and others had some knowledge of that. When man began to spread out, he faced different environments with different building materials. Whatever shelters were built to begin with, may have reflected expediency, a loss of some technology and a new set of raw building materials. Expediency may have been the biggest factor. This occurs today. On a plot of ground, a person may first set up a trailer; then he may build a frame home, and then he may build a brick home. It is not that this person has never heard of bricks before and discovers them right before building his brick home; he started out simply lacking in resources, and did what he could. This could explain mud huts which were later replaced by better mud huts, which were later replaced with brick huts, all occurring not over a century or two, but over a few decades (as Clough suggests).

Prior to the Neolithic Age (the "New Stone Age"), people appeared to live in small migrating groups which had no permanent settlements but they did seem to return to the same areas sometimes for generations. They were concerned with hunting and agriculture and some had hunting camps which were separate from these settlements.

Neolithic peoples domesticated wild animals and were familiar with irrigation and storage insofar as agriculture was concerned. Certainly, most communities would do both, and some would specialize, depending upon the personal preferences of the group. Neolithic villages have been discovered in the mountains of northern Iraq, indicating that these small, roving bands had begun to settle down in one place, but away from Shinar.

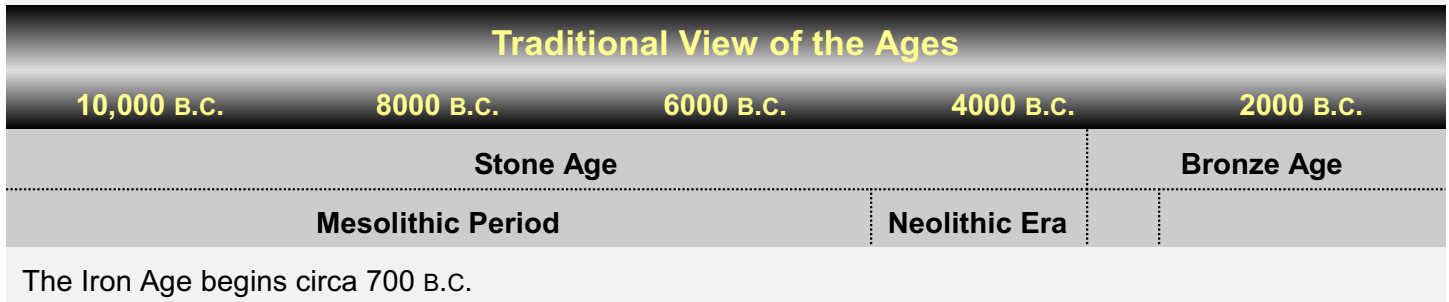
Recall that these groups of peoples had heard about the antediluvian civilization as well as about the true God and it is quite possible, if not likely, that to the unbelievers, they became mixed up. After all, most people who are unsaved and liberal in their religious background today see Buddha and Confucius and Jesus Christ as very

similar, if not essentially the same; and a part of man's search for God. Christians with any amount of doctrine understand that Buddha and Confucius represent not a search for the truth but a rejection of the truth. Because of the oral history which they had received, we would expect early, post-deluvian man to be polytheistic, which he is. Each had their own gods and goddesses (which would be slightly different because (1) information was passed down orally for several centuries and (2) each group had its own language). We find evidence that there would be a power shifting to the local cult and the officiators of that cult. The result as often what we call a temple-town, when many of the citizens worked for the local temple in one way or another. Some built religious towers (ziggurats). We would expect this because even though the fallen angels who cohabited with man in the antediluvian era have been put into chains of darkness, there still remains perhaps millions of fallen angels who desire to interact with man. They are able to do this through pagan religions. We would further expect to see a power struggle and to see power shift into the hands of these cults, and that is what history seems to bear out.

These groups also began to record their language in writing and kept economic records. Most developed arithmetic and most recorded their myths, legends, ethics, history, laws, songs and literature. So, by Abram's time, many of these villages and temple-towns had put their language into writing. There were certainly struggles between groups for land and buildings and some groups conquered other groups, causing an amalgamation of language, religion and customs. Although it seems that Neolithic man was pretty consistent in their polytheism, or worship of many gods, we also have evidence of ancient monotheism as well. In fact, what we would expect is monotheism predating polytheism, and for polytheism to be based, in part, upon Gen. 6 (the intermingling of man and angelic beings).

At the end of the Stone Age and the beginning of the Bronze age, we have since inserted the Chalcolithic period, which is the copper-stone period. This is around 4000 B.C. or so when copper was used extensively.

Interestingly enough, I came across at least 2 different secular sources which, prior to 10,000 B.C. there was an Ice Age which was later followed by higher ocean levels (which would be inline with the Biblical narrative).



**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

During the early part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., we have these groups becoming city-states. In fact, for all intents and purposes, these were the first empires. As their groups became larger, they became more efficient at providing the daily necessities and it became more important to provide some sort of defense against those from without. We see in history a simultaneous population explosion, better organized religions, and better defined boundaries. We find these early empires scattered throughout the Near East, in Egypt, Elam and the cities of the Mesopotamian area, Syria and Israel. We have found huge palace complexes and temples and evidence of large-scale commerce, including trade-agreements, cooperation and competition. Much of civilization seemed to be centered about what is known as the fertile crescent; the area in and about the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (which, according to Gen. 11:2, was where civilization began). With the almost impenetrable Arabian desert in the south (which likely became more and more inhospitable with time), trade between empires often involved routes going through Palestine.

It is during this time which we have also discovered sea-faring nations out on the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea. It is not inconceivable that their were even a few imitation arks where groups of people built their own ark and launched themselves out into the seas. Satan has always been a great counterfeiter of the truth.

Throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., Egypt had developed into an empire, having gone through dynasties 1-6 prior to Abraham's visit to Egypt. One of the first, great historical records is a plaque of slate, called the Palette of Narmer which dates back to 3000 B.C., depicting the conquest of Lower Egypt by King Narmer of Upper Egypt (however, he was unable to subjugate it but his successor, Menes was). There is still much confusion surrounding this and some believe that these two are one and the same person. When Menes united the two sections of Egypt, he proclaimed Horus, the sky god, the national god, and then claimed that he was the incarnation of Horus. Most of the pharaohs of the next several dynasties did likewise.

**Introduction:** The second half of Genesis Chapter 11 is the genealogy of Abram. Very likely that this portion of the Word is written by Abram. It would be likely that the previous chapter and a half was written by Shem. This is because Shem's line is covered in more detail than the other lines, which occurs not just because this is the line of Abram but because it would be natural for Shem to know his line better than anyone else. I've put together a **genealogy chart** which shows, if the figures are correct in this chapter, that most of those in Abram's line were alive at his birth. Noah was. It was from these direct sources that Abram was able to gather information on his line. Note that this line is similar to, but not an exact copy in vocabulary, to the line recorded in Gen. 5.

**These the Generations [or, Descendants] of Shem: When Shem was 100 years old, he sired Arpashchad two years after the flood; and Shem lived 500 years after he sired Arpashchad and he had other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:10–11]

Arpashchad means *boundary*; its stem means to *define or limit*. This means that Shem lived for 502 years after the flood up until Abram. In fact, he outlived all of his ancestors, with the exception of Eber, including Abram, down until Isaac. This is according to the numbers in the Masoretic text (the Hebrew); the Greek text adds nearly 900 years to the extent of this line. .

**When Arpashchad had lived 35 years, he sired Shelah. And Arpashchad lived 403 years after he sired Shelah and he had other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:12–13]

Shelah means *missile, weapon, or sprout*. Certainly it was used in the latter sense when it came to naming Shelah. Certainly a playful use of the language, considering that many in this line were farmers.

**When Shelah had lived 30 years, he sired Eber. And Shelah lived 403 years after he sired Eber and he had other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:14–15]

Notice that we have a gradual decrease of age of the line of Abram; Noah lived for almost a century, Shem for over half a century, and now these two for less than half a century. Also, circumstances like this would give rise to ancestral worship, because the oldest living ancestor would have been alive prior to the flood (eight of them would be) and Noah would have talked to God. Therefore, the older the person, the closer he would be to the truth as taught directly by God. Now this is not necessarily true; but it gives a good reason for this kind of thinking.

Eber is almost the exact same Hebrew word as *Hebrew*. It means *region across or beyond*. He may have been born when the inhabitants of the earth first moved to Shinar and settled there in Gen. 11:2.

**When Eber had lived 34 years, he sired Peleg. Then Eber lived 430 years after the birth of Peleg and he had other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:16–17]

Eber was the last person to live almost a half century. He was alive even up until the births of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He outlived Abraham and all of his progeny up until Isaac.

---

The age decline is actually quite simple to explain.



## Explaining the Age Decline

1. Adam through Noah lived approximately a millennium. There was intermarriage, as everyone had to be descended from Adam, but the human line was exceptionally strong.
2. After the flood, the line had been narrowed to just Noah's line, with some outside genes provided by the wives of his sons (and they could have been sisters). Nevertheless, the limiting of the genetic pool and the post flood environment cut their life expectancy in half.
3. Right before Peleg was born, the languages were separated, which limited the gene pool even further for each family. Each family had a limited group from which to sire children. This reduced the gene pool into the hundreds immediately.
4. From one group of ancestors, we have the dog family and we have dogs which had been so interbred, that the difference between breeds is phenomenal. However, this breeding has isolated certain characteristics and qualities and most mutts will be healthier, stronger and more intelligent than the stocks from which they came. From these several families of Gen. 10, we have groups of people who look completely different; they all have common ancestors, but the language division caused a sharp division of physical and intellectual traits.
5. The combination of further inbreeding and continued degeneration of the earth, with the proliferation of bacteria and disease, the age of man decreased into the hundreds and finally to approximately 70.

The age decline is an exponential decline, which is what we would expect.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

As we have seen, Peleg is almost the same as the word for *to divide*, and the two words are used together in Gen. 10:25. Logically, this means that immediately before the birth of Peleg, God separated the languages of man.

**When Peleg had lived 30 years, he sired Reu. Then Peleg lived 209 years after the birth of Reu and he sired others sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:18–19]

Reu might mean *friendly*; they are similar words, but not quite the same.

**When Reu had lived 32 years, he sired Serug. Then Reu lived 207 years after the birth of Serug and he sired other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:20–21]

Serug is very similar to the word from *tendril* or *twig*. It means *descendant* or *younger branch*. This indicates that Serug was probably not Reu's first-born.

**When Serug had lived 30 years, he sired Nahor. Then Serug lived 200 years after the birth of Nahor and he sired other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:22–23]

Nahor means *snoring*. Abraham's brother will be named after him.

**When Nahor had lived 29 years, he sired Terah. Then Nahor lived 119 years after the birth of Terah and he sired other sons and daughters.** [Gen. 11:24–25]

It is a very tough call as to who wrote this portion of God's Word. The reason is that it stops with Terah, possibly indicating that Terah is still alive at the writing, but it has the age of death of several people who died after Terah (Shem through Eber). It is even possible that Noah or Shem wrote this; or that these were public records and the ages were inserted after these people died. Because this line leads directly to Abram, my guess would be Eber, Terah or Abraham who recorded this portion of God's Word, working from the public records and leaving some ages blank.

Terah possibly means *tree*, but that is very uncertain. Terah could also mean *traveler*<sup>46</sup>.

**When Terah had lived 70 years, he sired Abram, Nahor and Haran** [Gen. 11:26]

This is where the line stops temporarily. For this reason, it would seem that Terah or Noah recorded most of chapter 11:10–26. Terah had to have some spiritual maturity because he named Abram *exalted father*. Nahor means *snoring* and Haran means possibly *to throw down or break*. The next verse seems to indicate a new author or a break in the time of writing.

Over the past few weeks, as I have concentrated on a group of about 10 lessons, I have been pondering two questions: what does the line of Shem mean, if anything; and what happened during this time period? Somewhere between 300–1200 years go by, and we know that (1) man settled in the Euphrates Valley and built the tower of Babel and (2) God confused the languages and scattered mankind.

Given that Peleg’s name is given as being significant in Scripture, let me postulate that, the names of some of these men may have reflected the eras in which they lived.

**The Meaning of the Names in Abram’s Line**

Name	BDB Meaning	Smith’s Meaning	Discussion
<b>Shem</b>	<i>name</i>	<i>name</i>	I don’t know that Shem may be better defined by his sons and where they ended up: Syria (Aram), Chaldea (Arphaxad), parts of Assyria (Asshur), of Persia (Elam), and of the Arabian peninsula (Joktan). Semitic languages find their origin with Shem.
<b>Arpachshad</b>	<i>I shall fail as the breast: he cursed the breast-bottle</i>	<i>stronghold of the Chaldees</i>	Also spelled <i>Arphaxad</i> . His name is less defined than the others. Most place him in the Chaldees.
<b>Cainan</b>	<i>decree, statute</i>		This is the missing man from the Hebrew text. During his time, man began to set up a governmental system with laws.
<b>Shelah</b>	<i>sprout</i>	<i>a petition</i>	It was determined that, if there are laws, there must be a system of judicial prudence, where men could go and petition on their own behalf.
<b>Eber</b>	<i>the region beyond</i>	<i>the region beyond</i>	Eber’s name suggest that his family had begun to think about the land further out. This suggests the generation which left the mountains and moved into the Euphrates valley.
<b>Peleg</b>	<i>division</i>	<i>division</i>	Peleg was alive around the time that the languages were confounded. For him to receive this name at birth, he would have been brought up in a family which, for the first time, spoke a different language than the rest of civilization.

<sup>46</sup> *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 42

## The Meaning of the Names in Abram's Line

Name	BDB Meaning	Smith's Meaning	Discussion
Rue	<i>friend</i>	<i>friend</i>	People had to choose what they would do, when languages were confused. They banded together by language and by clans, calling one another friends (implying a cultural similarity based upon familiar similarities).
Serug	<i>branch</i>	<i>branch</i>	Now that these families began to spread apart, Serug was viewed as a branch of the family.
Nahor	<i>snorting</i>	<i>snorting</i>	His name also means <i>hoarse, dry, hot</i> ; and may describe the climatic conditions for several decades of the Euphrates valley.
Terah	<i>delay</i>	<i>station</i>	Terah was said to be an idolater in the Bible, and is the reason that Abram had to separate himself from Terah.
Abram	<i>exalted father</i>	<i>a high father</i>	Abram is known as the father of the Jewish race.

Quite obviously, this is only a theory, but one which I believe to be solid. For the Hebrew line, the meaning of a man's name reflected the thinking of his father, which reasonably mirrors the world in which he finds himself. Therefore, the names of some of these men tell us something about the world in which they grew up.

**The Generations [or, Descendants] of Terah: Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran (Haran was the father of Lot). Then Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, Ur of the Chaldeans. [Gen. 11:27–28]**

### Why Historical Dates are Difficult to Calculate

- The calendar has been changed several times since the beginning of time. If I recall right, it was not until the 1700's when we got an accurate solar calendar (?)
- In the Bible, we have several places which indicate that there is a 360 day year (obviously, not a solar year)
- The numbers and ages given in the Bible go back to manuscripts written thousands of years ago and copied and recopied dozens of times. There is clear indication that the numbers found in our Bibles may not be accurate, as the Massoretic text does not agree with the Septuagint or with the Alexandrine Text, both of which differ from the Massoretic Text by nearly a thousand years. See **the doctrine of O.T. Manuscripts (not finished yet !!)**
- Archeology has certain presuppositions which are based upon evolutionary and geological **theories**, which affects the time table which they adhere to.

For these reasons, it is difficult to affix a date to Abraham's birth. Thieme places it at 2161 B.C.; the Scofield Bible uses the date 1950 B.C., and most scholars find dates between 2050–1650 B.C. ZPEB places it between 2000 and 1900 B.C.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

*Became the father of* is not exactly accurate and a change in the translation which I have been using. *Begot* is closer to *became the ancestor (or, the antecedent) of*. *Son* is not precisely *son* but it refers to *progeny*, as in Christ was the Son of David. I returned to the more familiar translation because it is probably accurate at this point in characterizing the relationships.

*Lot* means *envelope, covering, concealment*. Because of his father's death, Lot, Abram's nephew, was likely raised as Abram's younger brother, almost as the baby of the family. As such, like the baby of most families, he was possibly spoiled and the incidents which follow in Genesis seem to indicate that Lot was used to getting his way and that Abram was used to allowing his youngest "brother" to choose.

We do not know with any certainty exactly where Ur of the Chaldeans was. Up until 1850, it was assumed that this was Urfa, which was near Haran in Southern Turkey. Others place it at Ura' near Haran. What seems to be the most accepted interpretation is Ur is Uri, in modern Tell el-Muqaayyar. Excavations in this area have produced a layer of water-laid clay, indicating a great flood; cemeteries dating back to 2500 B.C.; and the ruins of a ziggurat (which is a temple tower built to heathen gods). Later, this city was ruled by neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) kings. Abram moved from here to Haran with his family (Gen. 11:28, 31).

Archeology has uncovered a great deal of information concerning the society in which Abram's family possibly lived prior to this move (this may have been the society which developed after Abram and company left). They have found the remains of five temples which appeared to have surrounded the Ziggurat of king Ur-Nammu in a semi-circle. The largest was 300' x 180' with thick, fortress like walls, and it was dedicated to the moon-god. To give you the concept of the strength of the materials, there were water fountains there which are still standing; the water troughs were coated with bitumen. There were temple kitchens with still-functioning ovens.

What has also been discovered at this site are spacious, comfortable homes. Whereas, excavations which found homes dating to 600 B.C. were fairly simple, one-story, three or four room houses, built around a courtyard, these in Ur, dating back to the earth 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. were two-storied villas with 13+ rooms, the bottom floor built of sturdy fired brick and the top with mud brick, the walls coated with plaster and whitewashed. The front door led to a small entry hallway into an inner court, which had paving (not unlike, in concept, to our tiled entryways of the present), and then there was a reception room, kitchen, living rooms private rooms and a domestic chapel. A lavatory was hidden under the stone staircase, which led to private and guest rooms.

This was a very prosperous society, revealing great comforts and advances, including hymnals and mathematical tables which reveals formulas for the extraction of square and cube roots. This indicates, if this is from whence Abram proceeded, that he was not a simple Nomad, but a man emerging from a highly organized, advanced city, leaving to move toward the promised land and away from the idolatry which abounded.

Again, this is disputed, partially due to the fact that the Septuagint does not read *Ur of the Chaldees* but rather *land of the Chaldees*. Further it is cited that Abram lived like a nomad with his family and herds, but this would be expected because he left this area.

Acts 7:2, 4 tell us that Abraham lived in Mesopotamia prior to living in Haran, so this indicates that either Ur was in Mesopotamia, Abram and company traveled through Mesopotamia on the way to Haran. Mesopotamia indicates the region between and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Abram, to move from where we believe Ur to be up to Haran, would have traveled along the Euphrates River, through Mesopotamia (which can indicate a very large area; or it can indicate the northwestern portion along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, whereas Babylon can refer to the more southeastern area. In either case, he traveled through and lived in the Mesopotamian area.

**And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. [Gen. 11:29]**

This is the first time for awhile that wives are named (we do not even know the names or the origins of the wives of Noah and his sons). Because Haran is specifically said to be the father of Milcah and Iscah here, and in v. 29, he is the father of Lot; it is possible that these are two different Haran's. On the other hand, it is more likely that Nahor is marrying his niece, as there were no prohibitions concerning that during that time. Milcah could possibly mean royalty (what father hasn't called his daughter *princess?*). Thieme suggests that Sarai means *contentious* or *bitchy*. Rotherham supports this. Terah had at least two wives and Sarai was Abram's half sister by the other wife (Gen. 20:12).

**And Sarai was barren; she had no child.** [Gen. 11:30]

Sarai's barrenness was a problem in the ancient world. At that time, it was a sign of prosperity to have a lot of children. God had commanded man to fill the earth and, as we have seen in our study of genealogies, most families did just that, often having 10–20 children. Sarai's barrenness is also mentioned in Gen. 16:1–2.

**And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldees in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Charan and settled there.** [Gen. 11:31]

Haran, Lot's late father, spells his name with an *h* (ח ; called he) and Haran, the place (called Charran in the KJV), is spelled with a *ch* (ח ; called het). Many translations do not differentiate between the two and called them both *Haran*. Charan was an important city on the trade route between the Mediterranean and the Mesopotamian area and it is unclear in this context as to how established it was. It was a flourishing city during the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., which would place it in this time-frame, either immediately before or after. If Terah and family came from a burgeoning, advanced city, it would be likely that they would be most comfortable staying in such a city. We are not given a reason for their move and we do not know if God had told them or just caused them to move. God moved me to Houston from California; however, He did not directly contact me and tell me to move. Living in two large cities would indicate that in order to do any trading and carry on any kind of commerce, Terah and family would have to learn the languages of those in that area. Being major cities, there may be have up to two or more languages spoken in each area and some variations of each.

**And the days of Terah were 205 years and Terah died in Charan.** {Gen. 11:32}

One chronology places this time period as being circa 2086 B.C. Abram leaves his father, apparently after he had died Charan, and moves to the land of Canaan. He obviously keeps in touch through whatever methods were available.

One expositor, Dr. C.D. Ginsburg, believes that this verse has been transposed. Abraham did not write this as a diary, recording each day as it came. In fact, it is possible that Eber died after Abram passed away. The previous section was a family tree, likely put together by Abraham from previous records, possibly with Eber's date left open to be filled in as his predecessors passed away.

If the dates given are accurate (which has been discussed), then the flood occurred roughly 300 years previous to this. This obviously plays havoc with archeological data, since it is likely that we can push civilization back at least to 4000-3000 B.C. If the chronology of the Septuagint (or the Alexandrine Text) is accurate, then we are roughly a millennium after the flood. This seems more reasonable to me.

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 12** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 12

### Genesis 12:1–20

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

- v. 6      [The Doctrine of Theophanies](#)
- v. 6      [Links to the Doctrine of Theophanies](#)

**Introduction:** Genesis 12 is the first time it is noted that God spoke to anyone since Noah emerged from the ark, roughly 400 years previous. Abram has just about traveled as far as he could go and still be near fresh water. The next movement is going to take Abram away from the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers toward the coast of the Mediterranean Sea into the land of the Canaanites.

**Now the Lord said to Abram, "Come forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you. Furthermore, I will make you a great nation and I will bless you, and make your name great; therefore, and you must be a blessing.**

[Gen. 12:1–2]

The first verse indicates that his father is still alive when these words are first spoken. Abram had to separate from his father in order to grow spiritually. He had to get out from under his father's shadow and his father's influence. We know that there is a problem in this regard, as God told Abram these things in Ur, yet Abram came as far as Charan (Haran), with his father and, apparently, with several members of his family, and he stopped right there. In one ear, God is telling Abram one thing, and in the other, his father Terah is modifying God's commands.

The emphasis here is not on Abram, but upon God's mandates, God's promises, and God's grace. The idea is, God is telling Abram, "Here is your pathway, here is your destination; and I will greatly bless you if you get onto that pathway."

What begins here is the Abrahamic covenant. Abram has done nothing of note to that time, because this information is not recorded. He is certainly a believer in Jesus Christ and has some semblance of maturity since God is speaking to him, but God is giving him an unconditional covenant. That means, that what God promised him, God would perform, regardless of his behavior. The last phrase is in the Qal imperative; God has ordered Abram to be a blessing.

Prior to this, God spoke to individuals and worked through individuals. God spoke with Adam and Eve, with Cain to place judgement upon him, with Enoch (we assume), with Noah and with Abram. Approximately 2000 years of human history have passed and God's Word has revealed a very small number of individuals who God spoke to. The Bible does not give us an organization for the worship of God, beyond sacrifices (which are barely mentioned) and the prohibition of murder (along with its punishment) at the exit of Noah and company from the ark. We have followed the line of Seth through the line of Shem, but this is the first time we have the promise of blessing upon an ancestral line.

God's first promise to Abraham is that He would bless him. One way that he would be blessed is with a child. Children were considered a great blessing in the ancient world and Abram will wait for a quarter century past this

calling before he is blessed with a child. Before he dies, Abraham will have been blessed with several children, all born past the time that he was able to sire children. Abraham will also be blessed materially; Gen. 13:2 indicates that his material wealth had become great. He had another wife after Sarai had passed away (Gen. 25:1); he had servants (Gen. 24:2, 35); and vast possessions (Gen. 24:35). Abraham was blessed spiritually. He left a spiritual legacy equaled by very few, which will be the study of the next few chapters. In fact, God blessed Abraham in every way (Gen. 24:1).

Just as many religions and individuals claim Jesus Christ as exemplary of what they teach and/or believe in, Abraham is claimed by many religions. Judaism rightly claims them as their racial father, but many of them have not followed him into regeneration. Abraham is second only to Mohammed in Islam, insofar as prophetic importance is concerned. The Koran, their religious book, contains 188 references to Abraham. We as Christians look to him as our father in faith; and Paul several times referred back to the fact that *Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness*. In fact, Abram's name (*Abraham*) will be found over 100 times in the New Testament. God has clearly made Abraham's name great.

Two great cities are mentioned in connection with Abram: Ur of the Chaldees and Charan. We know far more about Abram than we know about either of those cities. There were many nations around the world during the time of Abram—can you name a single king over any of these nations from that time? Probably not. But you know about Abram. From that era, there is no man whose name is more famous. And what did he do? He believed God. He trusted God. He did what God asked of him.

As a nation, there is no nation like Israel upon the earth. The Jews, dispersed prior to the birth of Christ; dispersed again in the first century A.D., their nation destroyed and occupied for the next 1900 years, still exist as a people and as a nation. No other group of people can make a claim like that. Even though Jews look very much like the people whose nations they inhabit, they are a separate people and will remain a separate people, a people peculiar to our God. God has made Abraham into a great nation.

**And I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse; and by means of you, the races of the earth will be blessed." [Gen. 12:3]**

One of the most fascinating studies is the history of the Jew in relationship to other nations. Spain, early on, in the 1400's (?) was a dominant world power and it had a fair and honorable attitude toward the Jews as a whole. Following Torquemada and the Spanish inquisition and their whole scale persecution of the Jews, it sunk to a third rate power, never to revive its greatness. Britain and the United States, with their fair and tolerant attitudes toward the Jewish people, have prospered greatly, the United States beyond any other country in history. God promised this to Abram 4 millenniums ago, and God has kept His Word throughout the ages, throughout the variance and change in dispensations.

Through Abram, through his progeny, the Jewish race, we as Gentiles have been blessed, as they recorded and preserved God's Word with accuracy unknown in the rest of the literary world. The Jews destroyed cancerous nations which threatened to severely pollute the world. Through the Jews, we have our Savior (and their Savior) our Lord Jesus Christ. The contributions of all other races put together are minuscule compared to the preservation of God's Word and the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

**So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Charan. So Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. [Gen. 12:4–5]**

Obviously, Abram had enjoyed some prosperity in Charan, as he no doubt did in Ur. He was not a simple nomad with a tent and a couple relatives, but a businessman who did business in great ancient cities. He was a man with great possessions, and an owner of slaves. Speaking of which, note that God did not tell Abram to release his slaves prior to his trip to the Holy Land, a some means of purification. Abram purchased or traded for slaves in

Charan, as a result of his prosperity, and nowhere in the Bible is he castigated for having slaves. See the **Doctrine of Slavery (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)**. Something else that God did **not** tell Abram to do: "Sell all your goods and give them to the poor." See the **Doctrine of Wealthy Men in the Bible (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)**.

Scofield lists the end of chapter 11 as wasted years in Charan. God has perfect timing and Abram has some spiritual growth to go through. The incredible high points of his spiritual life all occur when he is 100 years old and older. He still has another 25 years to go until that time. Those will be years of testing and preparation; and they will be years of spiritual growth. God has given Abram a promise that he will be the father of a great nation. God has to give Abram some time to believe this. He is in a half hopeless situation—his wife is barren—God will wait until Abram is in a totally helpless situation before He begins to fulfill His promises. For Abram's part in God's plan, there needs to be a quarter of century of faith in God's Word.

**And Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was in the land.** [Gen. 12:6]

At least 11 generations of Canaanites have been brought into the world. It would be possible, with uninhibited growth, with the size families which are given, to have millions of Canaanites extant at that time. In fact, at the average number of children in each family being 5, this allows us enough generations to have 10,000,000 Canaanites in existence at that time (these are not all the Hamites, as we have another three sets of families at least which have come from Ham, allowing approximately another 30 million).

Theologians, so that they can agree with the presuppositions of archeology, have thought that several generations are missing in the enumeration of the line of Shem. However, each missing generation essentially multiplies the population by 5 (using that as a median value for the number of persons in a family, a very conservative figure). There would be some attrition due to famine, pestilence, disease and likely warfare and crime (although none of these things have been mentioned). From the standpoint of reasonable population amounts and mathematics, there is unlikely many gaps, if any, in Shem's lineage in Gen 11.

In one verse, Abram has moved to the southern portion of Judah, 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of the way to Egypt from Haran. They have traveled perhaps 500 miles, on the simple command of God to come out to the land of Canaan.

**And the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.** [Gen. 12:7]

Prior to the incarnation, Jesus Christ appeared to man in a number of different forms; primarily as a man or as an angel, but also he was the burning bush and the cloud and the pillar of fire in Exodus. These appearances prior to the incarnation are called theophanies.

This is basically thrown together from the internet.

### The Doctrine of Theophanies

"What is a theophany? What is a Christophany?"

Answer: A theophany is a manifestation of God in the Bible that is tangible to the human senses. In its most restrictive sense, it is a visible appearance of God in the Old Testament period, often, but not always, in human form. Some of the theophanies are found in these passages:

1. Genesis 12:7-9-The Lord appeared to Abraham on his arrival in the land God had promised to him and his descendants.
2. Genesis 18:1-33-One day, Abraham had some visitors: two angels and God Himself. He invited them to come to his home, and he and Sarah entertained them. Many commentators believe this could also be a Christophany, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.
3. Genesis 32:22-30-Jacob wrestled with what appeared to be a man, but was actually God (vv. 28-30). This



## The Doctrine of Theophanies

may also have been a Christophany.

4. Exodus 3:2 - 4:17-God appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush, telling him exactly what He wanted him to do.
5. Exodus 24:9-11-God appeared to Moses with Aaron and his sons and the seventy elders.
6. Deuteronomy 31:14-15-God appeared to Moses and Joshuah in the transfer of leadership to Joshua.
7. Job 38-42-God answered Job out of the tempest and spoke at great length in answer to Job's questions.

Frequently, the term "glory of the Lord" reflects a theophany, as in Exodus 24:16-18; the "pillar of cloud" has a similar function in Exodus 33:9. A frequent introduction for theophanies may be seen in the words "the Lord came down," as in Genesis 11:5; Exodus 34:5; Numbers 11:5; and 12:5.

Some Bible commentators believe that whenever someone received a visit from "the angel of the Lord," this was in fact the pre-incarnate Christ. These appearances can be seen in Genesis 16:7-14; Genesis 22:11-18; Judges 5:23; 2 Kings 19:35; and other passages. Other commentators believe these were in fact angelophanies, or appearances of angels. While there are no indisputable Christophanies in the Old Testament, every theophany wherein God takes on human form foreshadows the incarnation, where God took the form of a man to live among us as Emmanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

## Links to the Doctrine of Theophanies

What is a theophany (from *Answers . Com*)?

<http://www.answers.com/topic/theophany>

From the Quartz Hill School of Theology:

<http://www.theology.edu/journal/volume3/theoph.htm>

H.P. Liddon on *Anticipations of Christ in the Old Testament*

<http://www.gospelpedlar.com/articles/Christ/liddon4.html>

The **Trinity in the Old Testament** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The first treatise is from *Got Answers . Org* <http://www.gotquestions.org/theophany-Christophany.html>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

A theophany might be a vision, a dream or real life. We do not have the occasional appearance of our Lord throughout modern history because we have the written Word of God, in its entirety. This is a blessing beyond comprehension which most Christians take for granted. We often think that if we were alive in our Lord's time, we would drop everything and follow Him because we could see, touch and listen to Him. Realize that very few people, comparatively speaking, spoke to our Lord and were guided specifically by Him during His incarnation. Those that had that opportunity often rejected Him and those who didn't often failed. With God's Word, it is just as though we have our Lord Jesus Christ right with us every step of the way to guide us in our lives and in our every decision. No previous dispensation had such blessing and guidance. Furthermore, we all participate in God's plan. In past dispensations, there were heroes of the faith, many enumerated in Heb. 11. However, in this dispensation, everyone of us has purpose, meaning and definition. Our lives can count as every bit as much as Abram's. We are given more specific guidance than Abram and we are given the Holy Spirit, our Helper, to guide us through this life. We do not have to go to the Bible and try to ascertain its contents for ourselves; God has provided men with the gift of pastor-teacher who will guide us through His Word. It takes just one thing; our choice, our free will, our volition.

Abram has revealed a certain amount of spiritual maturity. When God told him to move, he moved. This was not likely Sarai's choice, which would make this a difficult trip to make. They had been living in a rather cosmopolitan city and they were very well off. Why fix was ain't broken? Sarai was obedient to her husband, but it is likely that she gave her opinion once and awhile as to what a fool idea this was. In order for Abram to be made into a great nation, he will need to have a piece of geography. So God takes him to the land of Canaan and points out the land that he will possess through his progeny.

Abram does not have to be told what to do; just like Noah, he builds an altar to God; not something which is worshipped, just as we would not worship a church building or a pew, but an instrument of worship where from Abram would offer animal sacrifices. We do not know how specific God was in what He expected in the way of animal sacrifices. This was certainly revealed to the many generations previous to Noah on down to Abram, but not recorded in Scripture. It was certainly not near as defined as we will find in Exodus. The primary purpose was to teach the gospel. This is how God the Holy Spirit explained salvation to unbelievers. An innocent animal was slain on the altar to God. When a person at God consciousness, then as today, desired a relationship or knowledge of God, then God the Holy Spirit took the spiritual information available to this person, often revealing it through the animal sacrifices, and made it real and understandable to them. At that point they either followed Abram into salvation by believing God or they did not.

**Then he proceeded from there to the mountain of the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord.** [Gen. 12:8]

Abram has led his family across the land of Canaan and he has almost gone through it without recorded incident. His family might have an interest in stopping and settling somewhere and Abram needs some guidance. What does he do from here? He followed God into the land of Canaan and he's walked through the land of Canaan.

**And Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.** [Gen. 12:9]

God obviously gave Abraham some direction, as he continues to head south (the Negev is the southern portion of the land of Canaan). God leads us in various ways. Sometimes there are circumstances which *seem* to allow us only one direction. Abram will be led in this manner next.

**Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.** [Gen. 12:10]

Abram and family were not starving because they had great wealth and herds. However, for anyone who has lived off their savings, you can live off the interest, in which case you have money which will theoretically last you into perpetuity and you can delve into the principal, which means that you have a limited time that you can survive until the savings are depleted. Abram realized that with his slaves and family that he was beginning to dig into the principal, and, although he might be able to survive for several years on his present possessions, Abram is not that kind of a person. He looks to experience growth in his wealth and possessions and, when that does not occur, he takes steps to correct the situation. Sometimes you might find yourself spinning your wheel in a town where there is a depression; some people will pick up stakes and move to a more prosperous city in order to survive. This is what Abram was doing.

Now this is fine. It is not outside of God's will to think, to reason or to depend upon past experience. However, as we will see, going to Egypt is outside of God's will for Abram. What should Abram have done? He should have depended upon God. God wanted him in the land of Canaan, so he should not have left the land of Canaan apart from God's direction.

**And it came about when he approached Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Listen, if you would: you are a woman beautiful to behold and it will come about when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that**

**you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."** [Gen. 12:11–13]

Abram does not appear to be as concerned about losing Sarai as he is concerned about his own life period. This deception which he has planned, would, in an area where men are honorable or dishonorable, would, if anything, encourage their courting and/or taking of Sarai as a wife or as a mistress. Since she is exceptionally attractive, the ruse planned by Abram does nothing but preserve his own skin. If he is revealed to be her husband and faces residents of Egypt who desire her, there are two possibilities: (1) if they are honorable, they will do nothing; and, (2) if they are dishonorable, they will kill Abram and take her from him. If, as Abram plans, they purport him to be her brother, then if they are honorable or dishonorable, they may still try to take her, probably by ingratiating themselves to Abram first. So no matter what the scenario, which Abram has certainly thought out, his concern is not for Sarai or for his losing Sarai; it is for the saving of his own neck that he wants to enact this duplicity.

Thieme translates the latter portion of v. 11 "Thou art a knockout!" Often God tests us two or more times concerning the same thing. We have Abram and his half-lie here, Moses and the no-water test, Peter when Christ was crucified. God often places us in identical circumstances several times and allows us to choose our path. Those who have read or heard this story *know*<sup>47</sup> that Sarai is Abram's half-sister, so what is the big deal with Sarai telling anyone who wants to know that she is Abram's sister, which is possibly true, rather than saying that she is his wife? In other words, what is wrong with this picture?

### Abram's Half-Lie about Sarai

1. God has caused Abram to come down to the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:1—7)
2. Due to a famine, a circumstance beyond his control, Abram is going to Egypt (Gen. 12:10)
3. However, there is no indication that God is pushing Abram to go to Egypt.
4. Sarai is Abram's half-sister, both having the same father (Gen. 20:12)
5. In saying that she is Abram's sister, she (and Abram) are both telling a half-truth, which is the same as a lie. The relationship which is important and foremost is their marriage. Being half-siblings is not a matter of importance.
6. Furthermore, in all actuality, we do not even know if Gen. 20:12 is the truth; Abram is trying to talk himself out of a situation and there is no reason to think that he is not lying in this portion of God's word.
7. God has already promised that He will make him a great nation and He will give to Abram's seed the land of Canaan which they just went through (Gen. 12:2,7).
8. Abram is not concerned about Sarai's welfare, he is concerned about saving his own skin (Gen. 12:13).
9. How is it possible for Abram to die if he has no children and God has unequivocally promised to make him a great nation and to give the land of Canaan to his children? Abram, even if he was out of God's geographical will, which is a possibility, but not necessarily the case, has the best life insurance policy possible. God has promised things to him and his children, and since he has no children, then God will have to keep him alive until he does. It is that simple.
10. Our problem here is a half-lie or a full-blown lie; and, more importantly, lack of trust in Jesus Christ.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Why does Abram do this? If he is identified as her brother, any man who has an interest in Sarai, who is very attractive, will want to make the best impression possible. Killing a woman's brother is not the way to her heart, generally speaking. If anything, a man with an interest in Sarai will ingratiate himself to Abram and Abram will be in no danger. However, if Sarai identifies herself as Abram's wife, then there would be only one person who would stand between a stranger and Sarai and that person would be Abram. Under those circumstances, Abram's life is automatically in danger if they happen to run into any heathen who is attracted to Sarai.

<sup>47</sup> yes, *know* is in italics

**And it came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. In fact, Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was [seized and] taken to the house of Pharaoh. [Gen. 12:14–15]**

Abram was correct about Sarai's beauty; she was so attractive that Pharaoh's officials thought her to be good enough for the Pharaoh. This would be a rare woman indeed who would be appropriated for the Pharaoh. There is also another phenomenon of female beauty: in a roomful of brunettes, a blonde will get all the attention of the males therein; and vice versa, a lone brunette in a roomful of blondes will receive the most accolades. It is very likely that most of the women in Egypt were darker skinned than Sarai, so that she would stand out and be easily noticed.

**Therefore, he [Pharaoh] treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. [Gen. 12:16]**

Abram hit the jackpot; not only was his life spared due to his duplicity, but Pharaoh was trying so hard to make a good impression, that he showered Abram with wealth. Abram had to have a great deal of wealth to begin with or else the Pharaoh would not have given him so much. The Pharaoh has to give Abram enough to impress him and to ingratiate himself to Abram. If Abram was a simple nomad with a tent and a couple relatives and a couple animals, then Pharaoh could have cut back on these gifts by 80% and that would have been impressive enough for Abram.

**But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. [Gen. 12:17]**

This tells us that God is not going to fulfill His promises to Abram through just any woman; these promises are going to be fulfilled through Sarai. Otherwise, it would not be important for Abram to keep Sarai. Her gene pool is just as important as Abram's. There will be other races which proceed from Abram's gene pool; but only Jews will come through Sarai. The Pharaoh was obviously very successful in his position; he had men on patrol who procured beautiful women for him. He had a great deal of wealth which he could graciously give away. However, in the midst of all this human prosperity, suddenly trouble enters into the Pharaoh's home. We are not told what occurred exactly; we only have the word for *plague*. That is the Hebrew word *nega'* (נֶגַע) [pronounced *NEH-gah*] and it means *to strike a blow, to inflict a wound*. Metaphorically, it is used of God in sending divine punishment or divine wrath, often in the form of disease, to some entity. This is not the same word used repeatedly in Exodus in relation to Pharaoh (it is used one time in Ex. 11:1). *Struck* is the cognate verb; making this verse onomatopoeic.

When disaster struck the Pharaoh's household (we are not told exactly what occurred; we could reasonably guess that, since his house was struck, but not the country in general, that this would very likely be a contagious disease), Pharaoh examines his life, perhaps prays to his deities, to find what he has done wrong in his life. Insofar as he can determine, the only thing which he has done which is different is to bring Sarai into his household. What Abram has done is wrong; however, God will use that as a witness to Abram's God. We are not told any specifics (including the time frame here, whether Sarai was there for a week or a month), but no doubt Abram recognized this as God's work. Since Pharaoh's gods could do nothing about this, he certainly recognized the power of Yahweh himself. This is one of the many times one of Egypt's pharaohs were given a chance to believe in Yahweh.

**Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?" [Gen. 12:18]**

It is even possible that God came to Pharaoh in a dream and explained what the problem was. Pharaoh was certainly upset over the plague which affected his household; and being the most powerful man in the land, with access to all the Egyptian gods, he was powerless against this plague-judgment from God. The narrative is brief at this point, which indicates that Pharaoh was possibly visited by God (a fact outside of the realm of the author's—Abram's—experience), and therefore not recorded. Notice that in v. 17, God strikes Pharaoh and his

house; v. 18, Pharaoh calls Abram and asks why he didn't tell Pharaoh that Sarai was his wife. With no intervening information, Abram was probably not the person who told Pharaoh that Sarai was his wife. Throughout this chapter, the only information that we know is what has happened to Abram personally (which is why he is probably the author). Therefore, someone else must have told Pharaoh that Sarai was Abram's wife. One distinct possibility is Sarai herself. These judgments happen in such a way as to indicate to Pharaoh that his impending nuptials to Sarai is problematic, so it is very possible that he interrogated her directly.

God has taken Abram's lie, Abram's lack of faith, and has turned it into a witness for the truth. Unfortunately, we will not know until we arrive in heaven the eternal result of this witness to Pharaoh, whether he believed in Yahweh or not. Because he sends Abram away, it is likely that he did not.

**"Why did you say, 'She is my sister' so that I took [or, began to take] her to me as my wife? Now then, here is [lit., behold] your wife; take her and go." [Gen. 12:19]**

*Took* is in the Qal imperfect, which can mean that this is not a completed action, allowing for the translation *began to take*. In other words, this marriage was probably not consummated. The KJV reads *so I might have taken her to me to wife*. Following the first verb for *take*, we have two prenominal suffixes: the third person feminine singular (translated *her*) and the first person common singular (translated *to me*). *Take* is the same Hebrew word as *took*, except that it is in the Qal imperative, second person singular; it is an order for Abram to take his wife. *Go* is also in the Qal imperative, second masculine singular; meaning Abram in particular is ordered to leave.

We have a parallel situation in Jonah. Jonah, when told to give the gospel to the Assyrians, whom he hated, he hopped in a ship and went in the other direction. When this ship suffered attack by God, it was the crew which acted honorably and the believer who did not. Here, the Egyptian Pharaoh is acting honorably whereas Abram, a believer, did not. His pretext for lying is given in v. 13; however, God cannot make of him a great nation unless he has a wife and that wife is apparently going to be Sarai. So even if Abram's fear is certainly a real possibility, God is not going to allow Abram or Sarai to be killed, because He has promised Abram, and that which God has promised, He will perform.

**And Pharaoh commanded [his] men concerning him [Abram]; and they sent [or, escorted] him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him. [Gen. 12:20]**

There is nothing said about Pharaoh taking back the gifts that he gave to Abram. These gifts were certainly given with strings; that is, he gave those things to Abram in order to make a good impression with Sarai; however, what has occurred caused the Pharaoh enough fear and respect to allow Abram to leave without any retribution. Pharaoh recognizes God's power (which even Abram, in this situation, does not) and acts accordingly. Abram, who should recognize God's power, does not and behaves accordingly. This is again one of the many times in Scripture when an unbeliever shows more character than the believer. We as the believers, have the truth and are related to the God of the universe. Our behavior should exemplify this. Unbelievers in our periphery should be able to see that we have character and honor; when they show more character and honor than we show, we are a disgrace to our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is not snooty, self-righteousness, but a behavior which reveals recognition that we are related to the God of the universe.

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 13** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 13

### Genesis 13:1–18

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

**Introduction:** Chapter 13 concentrates upon the relationship between Abram and Lot. Their relationship is more like siblings than it is like an uncle and a nephew. Lot is the somewhat spoiled youngest child and Abram is the indulgent, overprotective older brother. However, in this chapter, we come to a point where they can no longer function together, even though they have tremendous wealth between them.

**So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev [or, the South country<sup>48</sup>], he and his wife all that belonged to him; and Lot with him.** [Gen. 13:1]

Abram is out of God's geographical will because he had gone down to Egypt, as he was in the Negev less than a year previous. God has in the past given Jews to Egypt as witnesses innumerable times. All the surrounding countries had some benefit of their close proximity with the Jews; but Egypt seemingly more than the rest. There will be millenniums of contact between the two countries, sometimes antagonistic, but always as a witness as to the true God of the Universe, Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Jews, Jesus Christ. God always allowed the witness of the Jews to stand, even when they were not as honorable as the Egyptians to whom they were witnessing to (as in this case). God also blessed Egypt greatly when Egypt honored their relationships with the Jews (as we will see with Abram's great grandson, Joseph, who helped rule over Egypt). However, when Egypt did wrong by the Jews, God witnessed to Egypt with the application of His justice, as He did in the exodus.

**Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.** [Gen. 13:2]

Even though Abram has made some serious mistakes in judgement, God still prospered him and God did not withdraw his promises from Abram. We, as believers today, understand some moral issues and the obedience required, and we recognize the severe mistakes<sup>49</sup> that King David made, but what Abram did was a serious mistake as well. This was covered back in chapter 12; but bear in mind, to know God's will and not to do it; to know God's Word and not to believe it, these are very serious sins. And yet, note how prosperous Abram is. This verse indicates that in the mist of a famine (Gen. 12:10), Abram is a very rich man. In fact, he and Lot are so wealthy that it is too difficult to keep track of their own individual wealth. This is Abram's third test (he was tested once when he was told to leave his father's house; he did, thereby passing the test. He was tested again when he arrived in Egypt and could have either trusted God for protection or he could have lied about his relationship to Sarai; that test he failed). Abram's third test will involve Lot and their individual possessions.

**And he went by stages from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.** [Gen. 13:3—4]

---

<sup>48</sup> Not south of Egypt, but south of the promised land

<sup>49</sup> Although most people do not understand why David was wrong to take a census

When it is possible, most translations give a word-for-word translation of the Hebrew into English (which would include cognizance of the suffixes and verb forms). This has its good and bad points. On the good side, a reader does not presume there are 3 Hebrew words translated by one English word, or vice versa. On the negative side, sometimes some meaning is lost. The KJV says that Abram *went on his journeys from the south* and *The Emphasized Bible* has Abram going *on his way, by removals, from the south*. The Hebrew word is *maçça'* (מַצְעָא) [pronounced *mahs-SAH*] and it refers to the picking up and removal, or the plucking up of tent pins, or the breaking of camp. Obviously, what this means is that Abram and company travel, camp, remain perhaps for a night, a few days, a few months, and then pick up stakes and move on. *By stages* I believe, would be the best way to translate this word and its preposition. Abram was supposed to be traveling throughout the promised land, but God has not contacted Abram since those last instructions, so Abram is wandering about, to some degree.

Therefore, Abram returns to where he had previously built an altar to God and sacrificed to Him. It is possible that this was the last time that Abram was in God's geographical will, but it is possible that God needed for Abram to be a witness of sorts to the Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if he had been out of God's geographical will, God still used this to His Own advantage.

Puzzled by what God's will was for his life, Abram decided to sacrifice to Yahweh and then to proclaim the character of God. Even though Abram's wealth has increased dramatically, Abram probably feels as though he was wasted a great deal of time going down to Egypt for no purpose. The increase in wealth was a fluke, not the result of a series of business decisions which resulted in prosperity.

**Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. Also, the land could not sustain them while dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.** [Gen. 13:5—6]

Their wealth had grown to such a substantial size that in the unpopulated wilderness land, there was not enough grass and grazing land for them to both use in the same area; and their livestock, apparently, kept getting mixed together. The tents which Lot possessed means that he had a great many servants, and/or hired help, and these many tents were their quarters.

**Furthermore, there arose a strife between the herdsmen of Abram, and the herdsmen of Lot. Also the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then dwelling in the land.** [Gen. 13:7]

The conjunctions throughout are the same, but for literary purposes, I have used words such as *furthermore* and *then* rather than just the word *and*. Because Lot and Abram grew so prosperous, there was not enough land for their respective flocks to graze upon. Certainly, in traveling together, their flocks became mixed. All this would cause some difficulties between them and their slaves and/or hired help were involved in altercations over these problems.

This verse also tells us where one of the groups from Gen. 12 moved to; the Canaanite moved into the promised land and were close to where Moses and Lot were sojourning. The Perizzite is not mentioned in the table of nations, however. This is their first mention in the Bible. They are mentioned several times throughout the early Old Testament as those peoples who populated Palestine prior to the conquests of Joshua. They are among the list of ten nations who occupied the promised land given to Abram in Gen. 15:18—21. There are two possible mentions of the Perizzites in secular literature, but that is only a guess. They might be the Pirati from an Egyptian vocabulary list and they might be named in a fragment from Amarna.

All of this is a quiet premonition of what is to come. The Canaanites and the Perizzites are a full-blown people. They are two peoples who populate the land of Palestine. Abram is a Jew—the first Jew, a rich man, but a man with a nephew with whom he did not get along, and a barren wife. Here they were guests of the Canaanite and the Perizzite in a land of Palestine. Over a half a millennium later, the children of Abraham will defeat and destroy these tribes of Canaanites and Perizzites, as ordered by God because of their consummate degeneracy.

**So, then, Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between us [lit., between me and between you] and between our herdsmen, for we are men [and] brothers. Is not the entire land before you? I ask you to separate yourself from me; if to the left hand, then I will go to the right, and if to the right hand, then I will go to the left." [Gen. 13:8–9]**

Now Abram is behaving as though he has some doctrine in his soul. He knows that God has given him the land so no matter what Lot does and no matter what direction Lot goes, God has given Abram the land. Therefore, it is not important for Abram to choose. It has been customary in most families to allow more leniency when it comes to the youngest in the family and I have known several people who have been jealous of this (my self and my other brothers excluded); they feel that the youngest has been given too much or is allowed too much slack. Here, Lot, who is more like Abram's younger brother than a nephew, is certainly indulged by Abram and given the first choice.

**Application:** Abram also recognizes something that most Christians do not: even though we are commanded to love one another, it is not necessary for us to spend any time together. There are some people who are Christians and they rub you the wrong way and you rub other Christians the wrong way. You will be spending eternity in heaven together and will have more than enough time to enjoy each other's company there; so you do not need any additional time here on earth. At that point in time, the fault for your dislike of one another will not be important because that will not exist. What is important is that we bear no mental attitude sins against another believer and that we do not engage in any sort of personal conflict with another Christian. We have been washed by the same blood, forgiven and loved by the same God, and are positionally equal. We have the same exact opportunity to glorify God, which we do by not harboring mental attitude sins toward one another. If it is necessary for us to spend time apart, then that should be on the agenda for our lives. Abram passes this test entirely.

**So Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the circuit [or, the round] of the Jordan [or, according to the Septuagint, all the country around Jordan] that everywhere was well-watered ([this was] before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, [it was] like garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt, as you enter Zoar). [Gen. 13:10]**

Lot does not have the benefit of the promises of God. He can only operate on human viewpoint. He cannot determine which way it is that he should go, nor does he even seem to realize that God has a plan for his life also. He is used to taking the best and that is what he will do.

It is obvious that this area is much nicer than it was several centuries later. During Joshua's time (after which some *scholars* allege that Genesis was written), this portion of the Jordan valley was absolutely desolate, the antithesis of the description given in this verse. It would make no sense for an author to make up a story like this, when everyone during and after Joshua's day could see that this land was barren. Since that time, however, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, archeologists have shown that there were several populous cities in this area previous to Joshua's time for centuries. Since it is highly unlikely that cities would be founded in a barren desert, this would fit with Abram's description which he gives here (in his writing). As Scofield put it, *the Spade of the archaeologist has served again and again to confirm the Scriptures, not to deny them.*<sup>50</sup> This also tells us that when God told Abram that He would give the land to him, that He was not speaking of some forlorn desert or some barren waste. The land was beautiful and fruitful.

**Then Lot chose him all the land around Jordan, so Lot took up stakes [and went] forward [possibly, eastward], and they separated themselves, each man from his brother. [Gen. 13:11]**

---

<sup>50</sup> p.. 21, 1967 edition of the *New Scofield Reference Bible*



There is the problem here that the Hebrew text reads *from the east*. Furthermore, this is also true of the Greek and Latin texts as well. If Abram and Lot are still up by Hebron, then the traditional locations for Sodom and Gomorrah would have been decidedly southward (moving a little to the east). However, they would not be moving *from the east*. Due east from where they were in Ai would be where the Jordan river empties into the Dead Sea. This is what it is like today; but that is not necessarily the way things were during the time of Abram. So, we have several problems and possibilities.

### Problems and Possibilities of Lot's Movement

1. The text reads that Lot moves *from the east, from the front, or from what occurs before*.
2. We do not know where Abram and Lot are right at this moment. In recent verses, they were near Bethel and Ai and possibly they have gone as far as Shechem. This puts them in central Israel, putting traditional locations of Sodom and Gomorrah south from them (and quite a distance south, by most determinations).
3. Straight in front of Abram and Lot, if they are near Bethel, would be an oval of land about the Salt Sea (which is 1285 feet below sea level), south and south-east, of them. Some scholars place the valley of Jordan that Lot traveled to below the Dead Sea, which is due south and slightly east from Ai. Actually, we do not know with certainty where Ai was. It is always mentioned in the context of Jerusalem, Bethel and the Jordan, so we would likely place it northwest of the Dead Sea, in the eastern foothills of the hill country. Whereas Lot moved toward the Dead Sea, the other direction for Abram would put him in the hill country not far from where Jerusalem would be located.
4. Therefore, we also have the problem of the topology, where they look down into the Jordan valley. They could have traveled to some land quite nearby Bethel and Shechem to do this, but that would place Sodom and Gomorrah at the northern portion of the Dead Sea.
5. We do not even know if there is a Dead Sea at this time; this may all be a river leading into the Red Sea.
6. If this is where Abram and Lot are, then Lot would be moving to the east or to the south to get to Sodom and Gomorrah (assuming that they were located anywhere along the west side of the Dead Sea (or the Jordan River, if the topology is different).
7. An alternative view is—and this is making many assumptions—that Abram and Lot have moved quite a distance from Bethel and Ai and Shechem, already traveling southward along Dead Sea (or Jordan River).
8. They essentially have to go all the way to the southern part of the Dead Sea (or the southwestern part of the Dead Sea) in order for Lot to move *from the east* to the Jordan River valley.
9. What suggests that these theories may be reasonable is:
  - a. There are ways to indicate that a person goes in the direction of any compass point; so, the text could have simply read that Lot moves westward. However, if Abram and Lot are, at this time, in far eastern territory (south or southeast of the bottom of the Dead Sea), then speaking of Lot going *from the east* would make perfect sense.
  - b. In studying a topography map of this area, it does not seem out of the question that, at one time, the Jordan River flowed all the way into the sea, and that there is no Dead Sea.
  - c. This would suggest that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was so great that, it ended the flow of the Jordan River into the sea, and what formed from this was the Dead Sea.
10. All of these are just assumptions. Only the first one can be tied directly and reasonably to the text.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

It is sad that Lot and Abram have traveled all this distance together and have been prospered beyond the point where they can even keep track of their wealth without altercation because they have been prospered by God. Abram has been prospered because he is a mature believer (or moving in that direction) and Lot has been prospered due to his association with Abram. God has His reasons for them to separate; likely it is so Abram can grow more spiritually; plus God has a plan for Lot.

Since the land that Lot chose was so beautiful, it is likely that others would have seen this land and claimed it for themselves. This would be the land occupied by the great degenerates of that time. They were degenerate to

a point that they were a cancer which had to be totally eradicated. God has allowed a lot of degeneracy to last, as we have seen in the United States, intervening only occasionally to wipe out segments of our population (not all of whom are degenerate, of course).

**Abram fixed his dwelling in the land of Canaan, but Lot fixed his dwelling among the cities of the land around Jordan, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were evil and sinful, against [or, before] the Lord to a great degree. [Gen. 13:12—13]**

The valley or the land around Jordan is, in the past few verses, the *circle of Jordan*. Owen gives this as the valley of Jordan (which is where it could refer to). Apparently from where they stood, the valley of Jordan, or the area around Jordan appeared to be a large circle or an oval. This would be visible as a circle (or oval) of green from where they stood, indicating that where they were was elevated somewhat with a reasonable vantage point over the entire valley (however, we do not have the verb *to look down* or the verb *to go down*, found in any of this context).

Lot has, for all of his life, been raised among people who were generally moral and likely believers in Y<sup>e</sup>howah. It is this sort of life that he has taken for granted. He obviously lacks the spiritual growth of Abram and looks out for number one. He moved in the direction of the green valley where there appears to be an over abundance of grazing land and water. He gave no thought to the people among whom he would be sojourning because he has taken honorable behavior on the part of others as normal. He will become vexed by the peoples of this area, as the NT KJV puts it.

The men of Sodom are described as evil, which is the Hebrew word ra' (עַר) [pronounced *rahg*]. The adjective and the noun and the verb in the perfect third masculine singular are not always distinguishable; however, here as an adjective, it means *evil, malignant, unkind, vicious*. This is modified by the phrase, *against God exceedingly or against God to a great degree* (the adverb follows *God*, therefore rightfully goes with that phrase rather than with *evil or sinful*). Abram and Noah could be classified as sinful, but they were not against God. Evil places man in direct opposition to God. This displays a mind set and a lifestyle, different from those who do wrong and recognize their mistakes.

*Sinful* is the Hebrew word chaṭṭâ' (חַטָּא) [pronounced *khat-TAW*] and without the vowel points, it is indistinguishable from the noun and the verb, just like *evil* (however, in the case of *evil*, even the vowel points are the same). This word means *to miss the mark, to do wrong, to behave sinfully*. Every man of God in the Bible was sinful and we are all sinful, before salvation and after salvation. Even our attitude does not always separate us. It is pointed out that we *should* behave in a manner befitting our relationship to Jesus Christ; but that belies the fact that some of us do not; even the intention is not there. In the case of the men of Sodom, their entire mental attitude and lifestyle is portrayed as being *against the Lord*. The lamed (ל) preposition takes up 17 columns in BDB, so this is very much a matter of interpretation. *Before, against, in front of, towards, with reference to*, etc. are some of the many varied uses in our language to represent the lamed preposition. The adverb (actually, it is a masculine noun used as an adverb) is the word m<sup>e</sup>ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m<sup>e</sup>-ODE*] and it functions as a superlative, classified as a masculine noun, but it modifies adjectives and objects. It can be translated *force, might, exceedingly, to a great degree, greatly, very*. This alludes to the excessive lifestyle of the Sodomites.

A brand new world will open up to Lot. Lot bears witness to the fact that *raise up a child in the way that he should walk, and when he is old, he will not depart from it*. Lot may have been spoiled and used to having his way and used to looking out for number one, but when faced with the baseness and evil of the Sodomites, even he will become disgusted. Those without the proper training would become a Sodomite just like them. Lot, however, will reveal his training, despite his own personal lack of character, in his inability to assimilate with those of Sodom.

**And Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot had separated himself from him, "Lift up, if you would, your eyes and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward and westward—for all the land which you have before you, I will give it to you and your progeny forever. [Gen. 13:14—15]**

Abram has possibly climbed up the foothills of what will later to be Jerusalem area, northwest of the dead sea, and he has climbed to a point where he could see quite a bit of the land of Israel. It is very possible that this is the same place where he and Lot stood back in v. 11. From this vantage point, God shows Abram as far as he can see in all directions, including in Lot's direction, all this land was to be his. In fact, this land covenant goes beyond Abram's ability to see. Today, this area suffers from years of warfare and lack of rain. During Abram's time, every direction that he can see is beautiful and green. Abram had to separate from Lot to get to this point. Lot, although far superior to the morally bankrupt peoples of the Jordan valley, would only hold Abram back. This is given to Abram's descendants unconditionally. Abram does not have to do anything in order to receive this land from God.

**"And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants could also be numbered."** [Gen. 13:16]

God's unconditional promise to Abram continues. Abram's seed (the literal translation) will be practically innumerable. We have two sets of seed for Abram: the spiritual and racial Jew and hidden in this promise, but revealed in the church age, Abram's spiritual seed, those who follow him into regeneration. That would be us believers of the church age; we are Abram's spiritual seed. All the believers of the church age and all the believing Jews throughout time will be a huge number. It is countable because God knows exactly how many particles of dust cover the earth at any given instant and this does not mean that the number of particles of dust equals the number of believers in time; there is an analogy being drawn here and the number of believers throughout time will be as uncountable by man just as the particles of dust on the earth are uncountable by man. Even Abram's racial seed will be uncountable. His line will not die out. Every generation has a large number of clearly identifiable Jews.

**"Rise! Go up and down in the land, to the length thereof, and to the breadth thereof, for to you I will give it."** [Gen. 13:17]

Abram has already transversed a great deal of this land. He began in Haran, almost as far north as you can go on the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, and he was transversed the land from North down to Egypt; throughout the entirety of this land, and far more; all of it was given by God to Abram.

**Then Abram moved his tent and came in and dwelt among the oaks of Mamre, which were in Hebron; and there he built an altar to Yahweh.** [Gen. 13:18]

Abram is directly between the Dead Sea (or where the Dead Sea will be) and the Mediterranean. He understands his relationship of Jesus Christ as well as any man on the earth and he is constantly building altars to God.

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 14** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 14

### Genesis 14:1–24

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

Introduction

[What We Learn from Genesis 14](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 14 as of this point in time is a total mystery to me. There are several questions: who wrote it? Chronologically it fits here, perhaps, but why is it here? This seems so different and so removed from the rest of Genesis. As J. Vernon McGee said, the continuity of Genesis would be just as intact if this chapter were not there. From reading some commentaries, a rarity for me during the first draft, let me offer you the following reasons for this chapter:

Gen. 14 is one of the most unusual chapters in Genesis, if not in the entire Bible.

#### What We Learn from Genesis 14

- ❑ This will give us a much fuller understanding of the person of Abraham with respect to his wealth, his character, his bravery, his assets. Also, the number of his servants and staff is revealed. Furthermore, the loyalty which his people have for him is apparent in this chapter.
- ❑ This chapter gives us a better clue as to the recording and the transmission of Scripture. There are a few places in here where a copyist, or, most likely, Moses, added a word of explanation or clarification. Very likely, vv. 3, 7, 8 and 17 have these points of clarification. Moses, being a genius of history, having been raised in the palace of the Pharaoh and receiving a royal education, a recognizing the need of the readers to properly interpret Scripture, would have been the most likely person to add those words of clarification, by the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. My point is that it appears as though someone recorded this information and then someone added those few words to it. Logically, this would be Abram as the original writer and Moses as the one who copied these things down.
- ❑ This chapter gives us a better idea as to the state that the world was in. This is the first war mentioned in the Bible. This is a major war, but the organization with which this is done and the existence of arms, indicates that this was a normal occurrence in life. At some point in time when the groups of peoples from Gen. 11 dispersed, there were going to be some territorial disputes. Certainly, one group would find a picturesque spot along a river with fresh water and an abundance of wild game and good land for farming and settle there, and another group would come along and either camp nearby or decide that they would like that particular place, and there would be a skirmish. Remember, that they could not communicate as a whole (although, with man's genius, it was apparent that some learned to translate from language to language at a very early time). Just like today, if you took one hundred people at random and dropped them into the middle of Germany, one or two could get by with their German skills and another 2 or 3 might be able to say a few German phrases to begin with, but the vast majority would be without linguistic resource. It was the same here.
- ❑ We understand how various nations interacted. Alliances were formed, nations were conquered, protectorates were formed, nations paid tribute; and, from time to time, a protectorate would rebel.
- ❑ We will actually learn some important principles of military function: the importance of training, surprise, and the proper use of mass.

## What We Learn from Genesis 14

- ❑ We have a better idea as to the state of the world and corruption of man, the violence that he was capable of soon after the flood.
- ❑ Most importantly, we learn that Jesus Christ controls history.

These few points of introduction only apply to the first portion of Gen. 14. There is a second portion which will require as much explanation as the first portion.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The next thing that we need to examine is point of view. This portion of Genesis, from Gen. 11:27–24:67 (or thereabouts), seems to have been written by Abram originally. However, he is not an immediate participant in chapter 14. How did Abram know all this information? Abram has a large number of people with him. My impression, at first, like so many others, was that perhaps he had 5–20 servants or families with him. Au contraire. He probably traveled with a band of at least 200–300 people. Lot, via blessing by association, probably had a similar entourage. Abram certainly did more than just travel about. He would have had scouts with him and interpreters. He would have, over several years, collected information about the peoples who inhabited the lands that he traversed. He was not a simple nomad bumbling across the land the best that he could. How do we know this? When faced with famine in chapter 12, he knows that famine exists throughout the land that he is in but that he might be able to find respite in Egypt. He knew enough about the land and the peoples to attempt that bit of duplicity with Sarai. This indicates that Abram in his wandering, did this in an educated way. He found out about the land and the peoples around him. This information of the beginning of chapter 14 was not necessarily pieced together immediately; he certainly knew some of these people by names prior to his skirmish with some of them, and ascertained the other names after he emerged victorious.

Another introductory remark is we have these people called *kings*. This evokes in our mind a kingly realm or a country of perhaps millions of people, a country which might be the size of Colorado. We have to lose that notion. These are rulers over a tribe of people. If, in the first millennium B.C., we have the advent of the city-state, these *countries* or *kingdoms* are likely much smaller. My estimate is that these countries might be the size of a city and might have anywhere from 3000 to 100,000 population. These city-states would be organized, some more than others, and would have some form of government, and they would trade and do business with other groups. The fact that there are no recorded skirmishes with Abram prior to this is God's grace. Abram might have passed through the land these few times as invisible to the inhabitants (I'm speaking figuratively).

A final point of introduction is a mention of a famous theory which many people fell into: the JEPD theory; this is where it was believed that at least three different people wrote the Pentateuch, at various times, each having his own particular vocabulary (one used the name Elohim for God, another used the name Jehovah for God, etc.). It was a foolish thought which had someone during the four centuries prior to the first advent weaving these various narratives together. Their reasons for this theory were: (1) different chapters of Genesis have a slightly different vocabulary; (2) man was not advanced enough to write in Moses' time; (3) it is impossible to prophecy with any accuracy, so every prophecy had to be written after the event occurred. These objections are easy to deal with: different subjects require different vocabularies. If I discuss a television program with a friend, I will use one set of vocabulary words; if I teach a lesson in differential calculus, I will use a different vocabulary; if I teach a portion of Scripture, I will use yet another and different vocabulary. Man was very likely able to write from the earliest times. God has the ability to see into the future, as time is His invention, so he can tell us in time what will happen in the future. The thrust of the JEPDers is to take divine inspiration out of the Bible and to make it a book like any other book, despite the evidence to the contrary. Why do I mention this theory here? I mention it because this vocabulary does not match any of the vocabularies used by J or E or P. The reason it doesn't is two-fold: (1) there is, in reality, no J, no E and no P; and, (2) the vocabulary does not match even the imaginary J, E or P because it is different subject matter than what is dealt with in the rest of Genesis; therefore, there is a different, specific vocabulary.

**And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar [i.e., Babylonia or Chaldea], Arioch, king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of Golim... [Gen. 14:1]**

V. 1 essentially stops us in mid sentence, but we have enough information to take us into a few paragraphs here. First of all, this portion of Scripture was often ridiculed because liberal critics pointed out that these kings did not exist in history and that this is all fanciful stuff cooked up out of Abram's imagination to make him look important. The problem is that, at one time, these men did not appear in secular history. Man is very negative toward God's Word. Even though we have an historical portrait which bears all the earmarks of authenticity, of unbiased history, man has rejected the historical portions of the Bible whenever there is no corroborating evidence in the secular realm. Man is predisposed to reject God's Word no matter what. Now, you find a scrap of papyri or an inscription in a wall or a clay tablet and man will jump at that as authentic and accurate (I am being a bit too harsh; archeologists by and large recognize that the history recorded by and for some rulers is distorted a great deal in favor of the ruler involved). Still, they will reject God's Word precisely because it is God's Word.

The Bible has an objectivity when it comes to its central characters unparalleled in secular history. The historical records of secular kings tell us that they were the strongest, fiercest warriors in the world; however, our writers of Scripture portray themselves sometimes as faithful and strong, but other times as mistaken, sinful, weak and willful. Furthermore, this is a consistent trait of Scripture, particularly with the great men of history, like Abram, Moses, David and (especially) Solomon. My point here is that unregenerate man, despite the objectivity of Scripture, is predisposed to reject God's Word because it is God's Word. Wherever God's Word does not have corroborating evidence from unregenerate historians, then the events recorded are though to be fanciful or fables.

However, over the past century, information about kings and kingdoms of this era have been retrieved from secular history, making this account much more reasonable than originally thought by the critics. It is thought by some that Amraphel is the famous Hammurabi, although this is not universally accepted. We are similar in time period (Hammurabi reigned in approximately 2100 B.C.; yet others place him in the 1700's or the 1600's), but the names are too different without a reasonable explanation as to why. When comparing a Greek and a Hebrew name, it is likely that an *h* might get left out because the Greek does not have an *h* (except for a rough breathing before some words) and the Hebrew has, more or less, two *h*'s. No one is certain who Arioch is, but there are several theories as to his identity and his realm. Chedorlaomer has a name which is clearly Elamish and appropriate to that era. He's been identified with one king of Elam (Kutir-nahhunti I) but the name is too different and the chronology is off. Tidal's name is likely identical to the Hittite name Tudhalia (the Hebrew letter ayin (א) is often identified with an Asiatic or an Akkadian *h*). However, he is not necessarily one of the five Hittite kings uncovered bearing that name. He is said to be the king of gōwyîm (גויים) [pronounced *goh-YIHM*], which many of us recognize. This word means *Gentiles, [Gentile] nations, people, peoples, nations*. Strong's #1471 BDB #156. It is possible that this is a particular nation (I doubt that it is another federation of nations as has been suggested by some) or an unnamed nation. Words do change in their usage and this word could have begun as the name of a particular nation and then later used to refer to gentile nations in general. You see, we do not yet have the corresponding term *Hebrew*, although it does occur in this chapter for the first time (v. 13). Since we do not yet have the distinct contrast in the mind of Abram, it would be reasonable for this term to proceed from referring to a particular nation and later be generalized to refer to any gentile nation. You cannot have *goyim* until you first have Hebrews and Abram is not yet a Hebrew in the technical sense until he is circumcised and thereby set apart to God. However, he will be called a Hebrew in this chapter.

**that they had made war with Bera, king of Sodom; and with Birsha, king of Gomorrah, Shinab, ing of Admah; and Shemember, king of Zeboim; and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). [Gen. 14:2]**

The kings mentioned in v. 2 are unknown to us. If you can imagine achieving one of the highest offices or places of authority and yet remain unknown to history; or, at best, a small footnote in history. These kings, were it not for the Bible, would be entirely unknown to us. Nobody remembers Shemember. The Bible mentions Zoar in several places; meaning that Bela later gave way to be called Zoar during the time that this portion of the Word of God was copied by Moses. Whereas, it is mentioned in Gen. 14:2, 8 19:22, 23, 30 Deut. 34:3 Isa. 15:5 Jer. 48:34, none of these references give us a geographical fix on Zoar. Various scholars put it south of the Salt Sea (along with Sodom and Gomorrah), but Deut. 34:3 seems to place this in the valley of Jericho on the North

end of the Dead Sea (i.e., the Salt Sea). Otherwise, Moses could not have seen it from Mt. Nebo (Pisgah). Furthermore, as ZPEB points out, those cities, if they were south of the Dead Sea, would have been much more remote and inaccessible, making them unlikely targets. It is not out of the question that there were two Zoar's, except that Moses identifies this city Bela with Zoar, so he would not have done this if there was another Zoar elsewhere.

**All these joined forces to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).** [Gen. 14:3]

Apparently, what had happened is the kings of the east made war with the Pentapolis coalition and subdued them, possibly individually (*made war* in v. 2 is in the perfect tense), and subjected them. They were in subjection because of the four kings of the east, specifically to Chedorlaomer. He was perhaps the king who was closest to the famous Pentapolis. The other kings no doubt received what was due them as spoils from war.

**Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. And in the fourteenth year, Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emin in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the desert.** [Gen. 14:4–6]

Chedor and company were busy making war when those of the pentapolis rebelled. It takes time to prepare for war, to map out what is going to be done, and they rebelled when Chedorlaomer and his allies were preparing for an attack on those mentioned. It was obviously a major campaign to solidify and to expand their control. Parallel to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea and east of same is the very famous King's Highway. This was known to exist long before 2000 B.C. Chedorlaomer and his allies were likely making a trek along this highway during this campaign. This was likely an important trade route and dotted with various groups of peoples. One view is that the kings of the east were taking control of a portion of this highway. At the north end of this highway and across from the Sea of Galilee is Ashteroth-karnaim, never referred to again in the Bible. The exact location of Ham is not known and the Zuzim are not mentioned again, but the direction of the attack is due south on the King's Highway, so this would place it directly east of the Jordan river running between the two seas, south of Ashteroth-karnaim. Shaveh-kiriathaim (which could be translated the plain of Kiriathaim and this would be found on the southern portion of the King's Highway across from the Dead Sea. The coalition of the kings of the east have taken over the area either north of the Dead Sea (which seems most likely) or possibly the southern portion of the Dead Sea, and now they have moved to the other side and are taking their campaign down the King's Highway, taking out one city after another. Mount Seir is southeast of the Dead Sea, right in the path of this coalition at the edge of several deserts. See the **Doctrine of the Horites** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

**Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who live in Hazazon-tamar.** [Gen. 14:7]

The four kings have been on a march due south; in this verse, they *turn back*—that is, they turn toward the Great Sea (the Mediterranean). It is my guess that Kadesh referred to is Kadesh-barnea, which puts them close to the Amalekites. It would also be reasonable that they turned completely around and went to Kadesh, which is northeast from the Sea of Galilee, and along this route also conquered the Amalekites and the Amorites. This places the Amalekites in a different area than they are historically known for, but they were a nomadic peoples and likely moved from this area when they had the opportunity. There is a problem with the mention of Amalek here (see ZPEB, vol 1, p. 123).

This route is fully explained here: **Genesis 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The next verse suggests this geographical scenarios: the four kings moved westward, south of the Salt Sea, and when they turned to go north, the pentapolis coalition was waiting for them—but they were facing the wrong direction.

**And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the**

**valley of Siddim, against Chedorlaomer, king of Elam; and Tidal, king of Goiim; and Amraphel, king of Shinar; and Arioch, king of Ellasar—four kings against five. [Gen. 14:8–9]**

This is the only mention in the Bible of the Valley of Siddim, which is likely a lower area along the shores of the Dead Sea, possibly now under water. The four kings had just finished a long war which involved at least 7 battles and they were certainly exhausted and their supplies for war depleted. However, it does not appear that the five kings know any of this; and that they do not have intelligence out there determining where the eastern alliance was moving. This lack of intelligence would prove to be the undoing of the western coalition.

The historicity of this chapter has been questioned because (1) many readers saw Abram as a nomad with perhaps a half a dozen or so slaves; (2) the extensive campaign herein discussed sounded too advanced for the preconceived notions of some scholars; and, (3) some of the peoples mentioned have been lost in history. Archeologists, forever coming to our rescue in matters historical have unearth several cities from this time period, which could be the very cities named; which cities showed signs of being heavily fortified during Abram's time.

**Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But the who rest fled to the hill country [or, the mountains]. [Gen. 14:10]**

The KJV has the Valley of Siddim being full of slime pits; which is pretty darned icky. The correct word here is *tar* (we saw the same word in building the tower of Babel). The hill country puts us on the west side of the dead sea, again either at the north or the south.

**Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply and departed. Furthermore, they also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom. [Gen. 14:11–12]**

Being related to Abram meant that Lot received a great deal of protection and prosperity by association. However, he chose to live close to Sodom to be considered one of the Sodomites. His choosing to change associations meant that blessing by God in his life was changed. When associated with Abram, Lot was blessed; when associated with Sodom, he received their cursing. Furthermore, at one time, Lot had great wealth, and the four kings plundered this wealth and took Lot with them into slavery. Lot did lose his wealth, but it is not clear in Scripture when this all took place.

**Then a fugitive came and told Abram, the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies [or, converts] or Abram [lit., these were possessors of the covenant of Abram]. [Gen. 14:13]**

The four kings finished up their campaign against the Amorites, which puts him somewhere near Abram, who is probably settled in the hills of Palestine, at a good spot to observe his land given to him by God. He has met several different people there (God has brought these people to Abram) and they have allied themselves with him and the true God.

This is the first use of the word Hebrew. It is the word 'Ib<sup>e</sup>rîy (עִבְרִי) [pronounced *g<sup>be</sup>-VREE*], which is poorly transliterated as *Hebrew*. This word, interestingly enough, is found most often in the Law of Moses and in the book of 1Samuel; after this, we will find it thrice in Jeremiah and once in Jonah. Strong's #5680 BDB #720. At this point, we ought to examine the **Doctrine of the Hebrew Word for Hebrew (HTML) (PDF)**. It likely means *one from beyond, one from the other side*. Some say it means *one who crosses the river*. The early dispersion from Gen. 11 placed certain peoples in certain areas where they remained for centuries. Abram covered a great deal of ground in his travels, something which is less than safe during those times, with the hostile, war-like groups in existence, yet God protected and guided him through his trek.

**And when Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive, he led out his trained men born in his house, 318, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. [Gen. 14:14]**



*Dan* here is not the reference to a region which is north of Galilee. This would not be Dan, the son of Jacob, even if this were copied later by Moses, because he would have given the original name and then added *which is Dan*. Also, the preposition preceding Dan is 'ad (אֶד) [pronounced *gahd*] and it means *as far as, even to, up to*. The impression is that it was a distance which was covered by Abram; the area called Dan could not be too far from where they were (which is probably southwest of the Salt Sea).

Abram has three company commanders in the persons of Mamre, Eshcol and Aner, and he is able to put together 318 or more men from his encampment. These are *trained* men, an Hebrew word found nowhere else in the Bible. The same word is found in Egyptian documents from this same period as a reference to *hired soldiers*. There are certainly women and children and some men which are left behind to protect them, so Abram is traveling with anywhere from 500 to 1000 people. They all work for him and many of them are converts. We can only make wild guesses as to the size of the armies which he pursued, but 300-3000 per each king would be ballpark. Note that five kings, rested and lying in wait for the four kings, could not defeat them. Also, nothing is said up until this time about any warlike activity with Abram. Their weapons are not alluded to; however, during this period, archeology has uncovered various kinds of axes, knives, spears, leather shields, clubs with copper and limestone heads, boomerangs, bows and arrows. We do not know what kind of weapons Abram and company specifically used, but likely they were made of stone or bronze and possibly doubled for farming implements. This indicates great loyalty to Abram.

**And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and struck them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which was north of Damascus.** [Gen. 14:15]

Hobab might be a city lost in time, but Damascus is not. Damascus possibly did not exist during Abram's time and this was added by Moses to help with the geography. It might be identified with the modern since Hoba is 50 miles north of Damascus, which puts us in the correct place. It is possible that the ancient Hobah, as a city, was dying out during Moses' time so he therefore added this as he copied God's Word. Hobah could have been a minor city and Abram added this as they traveled through Damascus to get to Hobah.

Abram uses some stealth and skill as a soldier. He is likely outnumbered, so he envelops the forces of the four kings, allowing them one route of escape. Had he completely surrounded them, they would have no choice but to fight their way out, and their larger numbers might have prevailed. Abram caused a serious panic, was able to kill a great many of them, and then was able to pursue them, having a psychological advantage. It is possible that the four kings left their prisoners behind when they ran, giving Abram some more troops. The night attack is apt because they cannot see how many soldiers Abram is commanding, they do not know from whence they have come, and the fierce fighting that they faced as they began to wake up totally routed them.

**So he brought back all the possessions, and also with Lot his brother, with his possessions and also brought back the women and the people.** [Gen. 14:16]

There is an interesting difference in tenses here. We find the Hiphil of *shûwb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo<sup>b</sup>v*], which means *to cause to return, to bring [back], to return something, to restore, to regain, to recover, to be caused to return*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. With regards to the possessions, the verb is used in the imperfect tense, which indicates continual action, which requires some time, or a process. The eastern alliance had stolen so much, that gathering all that they had taken took several trips to recover (some was probably taken in the retreat, and then dropped in the retreat). However, with regards to the people, who were taken to become slaves, they were *brought back* in the Hiphil perfect tense, which means, it occurred all at once.

It is quite likely that Abram had freed these goods and peoples at the initial attack; or at least the majority of them. Had he just turned and ran with them, they would have been pursued and likely defeated. Abram did what was most prudent and continued the battle in pursuit, unequivocally defeating his enemy and rescuing all the goods and peoples. This is God's grace extended to Sodom and Gomorrah prior to their judgement. They now have every reason to respect Abram and to find out about his God. They were unable as five armies to defeat the four kings and their armies, yet Abram was able to accomplish this. Notice that one of the most important things taken and then retrieved is the women. Women in the ancient world were often captured by the opposing force and

either raped or taken with the prevailing army as booty.<sup>51</sup> They became the wives of the soldiers who killed their men. This is how some races intermingled. Their removal from the losing army was a crushing blow and a total defeat of the morale.

**Then came forth the king of Sodom to meet him, after his return from the defeating of Chedorlaomer, and the kings who were with him at the valley of Shaveh, that is, the valley of the King.** [Gen. 14:17]

This area is near Salem (Jerusalem) and Josephus places it only a quarter mile outside of Jerusalem. It was originally called the valley of Shaveh, and, because of this meeting, the valley of the King. The kings of the pentapolis are grateful to Abram and have respect for him. However, rather than name this the valley of the kings, it was named the valley of the King, following this meeting. It is my contention that this is Abram's witness to these men of his ruler, his king, the Lord God of the universe.

**Now Melchizedek king of Salem, had brought forth bread and wine, he being priest of the God Most High.** [Gen. 14:18]

See Dean's Genesis-088b The Priestly Order of Melchizedek. Genesis 14:17-24 for why Melchizedek is not a theophany.

God spoke long ago to numerous peoples in many and diverse manners. Melchizedek, mentioned in a narrative only here, is a type of Christ. Jesus Christ is called an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Heb. 7:2 tells us that Melchizedek means king of righteousness and that king of Salem means the king of peace. This identifies him with Jesus Christ, our High Priest. A priest is one who represents man to God. Melchizedek is a type, not a preincarnate Christ. That is, he represents or is analogous to Jesus Christ. Melchizedek is the Hebrew word *Mal'kiy Tsedek* (מלכי־צדק) [pronounced *mahl<sup>e</sup>-KEE-TSEH-dek*]. *Tsedek* is the Hebrew word for righteousness and *Melek* (מלך) [pronounced *MEH-lehk*] means *king*. Salem is *Shâlêm* (שָׁלֵם), which means *whole; complete, completed, finished; safe, at peace; cherishing peace and friendship*; transliterated *Salem*. Strong's #8004 BDB #1024. We are more familiar with *shâlôwm* (שָׁלוֹם) or *shâlôm* (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which varies only by a vowel point and which means *peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022.

McGee explains this relationship quite well. With central figures of the Bible, their genealogy is sometimes of utmost importance. An entire chapter almost is spent on the genealogy of Abram. Here is a man who steps out of nowhere, is not previously mentioned, there is no genealogy to identify him, and Abram shows him great respect. The name for God here is El Elyon, a term used elsewhere in Scripture for the God of the universe. This is not just a local deity; this is the creator of the universe, and this is clearly monotheism. The author of Hebrews draws the analogy for us in Heb. 7:3: *[Melchizedek, who is] without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides [as] as priest forever.* Melchizedek comes to us in Scripture out of nowhere, with no mother or father or genealogy and no beginning and no end. As a person, he certainly had these things, but as a person in Scripture, this information is lacking; he is thereby analogous to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is eternal, who comes out of eternity into time, having no beginning and no end to His deity, fully able to be a Priest to God as He is equal to God.

We know only a small fraction of the divine revelation to the world in the Age of the Gentiles. Even though we are following Abraham, the first Hebrew into the Jewish Age, we are still in a transitional period of time. The portion of divine revelation that we know concerning behavior and the laws of worship was that which was given in Scripture as Noah and crew left the ark. We know that God appears to some people (Abram, specifically) in a manner not discussed specifically. Although it seems logical that God also must have appeared to Melchizedek, we do not know that for certain. Since Abram recognizes his priesthood, there is a portion of this story to which we are not privy. We do not know if God has revealed Himself to Abram and has told him about Melchizedek; we do not know if they have met before and God revealed to Melchizedek his function; we are not certain of any of

<sup>51</sup> I doubt that this is the origin of our modern term, however

this. However, as a priest to the world, Melchizedek, living in the holy city of the promised land before either was established as such in time, was able to require tithes, which represented obeisance and recognition of his priesthood. Melchizedek has a specific function here; Abram is to guide his own spiritual life and this fellowship and relationship with Melchizedek will help him face some very tempting rewards.

It is in v. 18 that we have the first mention of the city of Jerusalem (Salem). Its existence during this time period is corroborated by the Tel el Amarna Tablets, which were found in Egypt. These tablets are letters written between the kings of Egypt and the kings of the various cities in and around Palestine during the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The general conditions of Palestine as written in the Bible agree generally with the conditions indicated by these letters.

In fact, as Scofield points out, Archeology again and again shows that the cities mentioned in Genesis preceded in time those cities mentioned in Joshua, which precede those cities mentioned in Kings. This may not seem that important to some, but *higher critics* of the Bible for centuries have accused the writing of Genesis to come quite later than the tradition time period given for it. However, if that were the case, then the author would have a very difficult time getting the cities correct as their history was no better than our history. We would see some sets of cities over a short period of time in a chronological order, but we would not see the cities in the Bible over millenniums accurately presented in the time-frame that they were presented in. This does not *prove* the Bible; what archeology does do is reveal that, as we should expect, that God's history of the world is more accurate and objective than any other history recorded by man.

I should mention the bread and the wine. These are similar to the communion elements (although, leaven is not a part of the communion or Passover, since it represents evil). However, this word for *wine* is used for the drink-offering mentioned several times in Leviticus, so we possibly have the precursor to our communion here, although the writer of Hebrews does not draw any analogies concerning this.

**And he blessed him and said, "Blessed is [or, blessed be] Abram by God the Most High, Possessor [or, Creator] of heaven and earth." [Gen. 14:19]**

The word in question here is qânâh (קָנָה) [pronounced *kaw-NAWH*], and it can mean *to erect, to create* (by extension), *to procure, to purchase*. Since God did not *acquire* the earth and the universe from anyone, He would be the *Creator* and *Possessor* of it. *Blessed is*, is not in the imperative, so *blessed be*, although found more often in English translations, is not necessarily the correct translation. Abram has been blessed and continues to be blessed. He has received great wealth and prosperity, a drop-dead beautiful wife, and guidance from God. He is victorious where five other kings were not. Melchizedek recognizes this in Abram and they recognize that they both worship the same God. They also both recognize that it was God who delivered Abram's enemies into his hand (i.e., he was victorious because of Jesus Christ).

**"And blessed is God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he [Abram] gave him [Melchizedek] a tenth of all. [Gen. 14:20]**

In the dispensation of the Gentiles (as it is called) there was a system of worship which involved the priesthood and animal sacrifices (which spoke of Jesus Christ). The priesthood had to be supported and Abram recognized this and gave to Melchizedek a tenth of his great wealth. There was some kind of a moral code that went beyond *you will not murder*; we know this because the Sodomites have already been called very sinful and in the NT, Lot is said to be *vexed* by their wickedness. My thinking is, Adam and the woman understood the moral code of God perfectly, and each successive generation, less so. But still, in the time of Abram, there were those who understood, through the teaching of their parents, a fairly accurate moral code. This was so important to a segment of the population that kings attempted to assemble a perfect code for society. However, that was not the case in Sodom.

This chapter makes it appear as if Abram was confronted by the King of Salem and the King of Sodom at the same time, and he chose to first interact with the King of Salem. But now the King of Sodom speaks up again, uncertain about all this worship of God and tithes. He does not appear to be the least bit interested. He has a

different agenda in mind. It is not necessarily some sort of evil agenda, but it is separate from the worship of God that occurs with Abram and Melchizedek.

**Then said the king of Sodom unto Abram, "Give to me the persons, but the goods, take for yourself." [Gen. 14:21]**

The king of Sodom was defeated in battle and many people under his control were taken as slaves, including Lot (who was Abram's primary objective in this pursuit and battle). With his people back, the king of Sodom can build up his wealth again. However, in all this religious talk, he checks Abram for the bottom line. Sure Abram has given some money to Melchizedek; but he just made a tremendous score. Abram does not think that way; the wealth belong originally to the kingdom of Sodom (and the others in the Pentapolis) and Abram wants to return this wealth to the Pentapolis.

**And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up my hand to the Lord God Most High, Creator [and, Possessor] of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, so that you would not say, "I have made Abram rich." [Gen. 14:22–23]**

Abram is blessed directly by God. He wants that to be clearly understood by any who come in contact with him. He does not allow an increase his wealth through campaigns of war and plunder; he is not a mercenary who has rescued some Sodomites for all the wealth that he could carry. He is not interested in the king of Sodom giving him any wealth whatsoever. The king of Sodom is a wicked man who runs a wicked kingdom. Their evil is not yet to the point that God will remove them from history, but, at some point, He will. Abram cannot compromise at this point. He takes no wealth for himself for what he has done.

However, Abram does not apply his own standards to his allies. There are some Christians who give sacrificially all their lives and they have families and their families do without because they are giving sacrificially. Abram does not expect his people to have the same values or be in the same stage of growth as himself. Abram does not force them to do the same things as he does; he does not expect them to behave as mature believers and allows his men who ran the pursuit to be paid for what they did.

**"I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre; let them take their share." [Gen. 14:24]**

This, to me, is a wonderful verse. There is nothing more insufferable than self-righteous Christians who have certain standards and they impose these standards upon everyone else, Christian or not, mature or not. Only the most foolish of parents expect exceptional table manners from a 2 year old child (just as only the most foolish of parents do not expect table manners at age 6). Abram has his high standards and he lives by them. He does not, however, superimpose and enforce these standards upon others; this is why he had a staff that was loyal enough to follow him into battle.

**From here, we go to Psalm 33.**

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

**Genesis 15** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It may be found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 15

### Genesis 15:1–21

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

**Introduction:** Now chapter 15 fits right into the Bible. Abram has just passed a series of tests and God has rewarded him and God will renew and expand upon his promises to Abram. This will be not unlike Bible class; some repetition with some new stuff thrown in.

**After these things, the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I [am] a shield to you, your exceedingly great reward." [Gen. 15:1]**

This is the first time that we are told exactly how God spoke to Abram (He may have used other methods before). Even here, it is vague. We do not know if these words are audible, although that would be likely; and we do not know if they are disembodied. What is Abram actually seeing in this vision? It also appears as though this begins as a vision, but continues in reality. That is, Abram goes into some kind of a trance, and then God, while continuing to communicate with him, brings him out of the trance and back into the real world. This word for *vision* is found only four times in the OT: here, Num. 24:4,16 and Ezek. 13:7. In the latter case, it is used of false visions. When such a word is used so infrequently over approximately 4000 years of human history, then we should not expect to have similar visions on a regular basis. That's known as being in a psychotic state rather than being in a divine rapture. If you go into a trance and hear voices, it is either your very vivid imagination at best, and demonic communication at worst. God does not have to speak to us in visions; He speaks to us through His Word. You do not have to over-think every second of the day and wonder if you should drive down beltway 8 or if God wanted you to take FM 1960 instead. People will disregard Bible class, entertain gross sin in their lives, and then be disappointed that God does not tell them what to do in their daily lives for trivial matters. If you are regularly attending Bible class, rebounding and dealing with God's known mandates for your life, you do not need God coming to you in a vision and revealing some trivial piece of guidance to you.

After God tells Abram not to fear (Qal imperfect; Abram is to continue in a state of non-fear), there are no more verbs. In the Hebrew, word-for-word, it reads, *I shield to you; your reward great exceedingly*. *I am* would be the subject and the very for both phrases (the shield and the reward) because *I* is in a grammatical position of great emphasis. The normal way to phrase this would have been to not even use the personal pronoun but to use the first person singular Qal perfect (or imperfect) of the absolute statues quo verb *to be*. We would expect to find *hâvâ'* (הָוֵא) [pronounced *haw-vaw'*], *hâvâh* (הָוֵה) [pronounced *haw-vaw'*] or *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [also pronounced *haw-vaw'*]. However, instead, we find the personal pronoun *I* in the emphatic position, indicating a very strong *I am* should be here. For this reason, it should be the subject and verb for *shield* and for *reward*.

Notice the time frame; Abram has gone off and fought against the four strongest kings of that region and has recovered his nephew Lot. This required courage and strength and divine guidance. After this is over, then God tells Abram "I am your shield." This is a promise to us. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are protected by God in many ways:

- ✘ He is our shield (Gen. 15:1)
- ✘ He is our wall of fire (Zech. 2:5)
- ✘ He has provided guardian angels for us (Gen. 32:24 Ex. 14:19 Dan. 3:28 6:22 Psalm 91:11)
- ✘ If we desire to know the Truth, God will guide us into all Truth (John 16:13)

Abram, operating from truth in his soul, without God having to tell him, passed up the reward given to him by the king of Sodom. God indicates that what he did was correct. God tells Abram that He is his great reward. Abram does not need to depend upon man for blessing and reward. It is important when something occurs in the Bible, when something is said, that we note who is speaking, who is being spoken to, and what is the context. Here God is speaking to Abram after a great spiritual victory.

**And Abram said, "My Lord Yahweh, what will you give me, for I continue childless and the son of the heir of my house [is] Eliezer of Damascus [lit., Damascus, Eliezer]." [Gen. 15:2]**

Abram, although blessed in almost every way, is over-thinking on his progeny. God has specifically promised him that **his** seed will be like the dust of the earth and has indicated, by divinely intervening to recover Sarai from the Egyptians that Sarai will bear the child (or children) which will result in descendants galore. God has just led him into battle, has made Abram victorious; God has blessed Abram in every way; God is Abram's shield and his reward. Furthermore, it isn't that Abram wants just one more thing which God has not given him; God has promised Abram a son. Abram will have descendants. He will not go childless. God, Who has done everything else for Abram, has already promised a child to Abram, so Abram does not need to whine about being childless. God is cognizant of that and God has a plan for Abram's life and a child will be born to Abram in God's time, not Abram's because God's timing is perfect. Abram does have one person that he favors as a son, Eliezer of Damascus, who, perhaps, was born as they traveled through or near Damascus. We know nothing about this person other than, insofar as Abram is concerned, he is the only person who is close to being an heir of his.

**Furthermore, Abram said, "Point of fact [lit., behold]: You have given me no offspring, moreover [lit., and behold] a slave born in my house [lit., a son of my house] will be my heir [lit., will take possession of that which is mine]." [Gen. 15:3]**

Have you ever noticed that there are some people who obviously think that you are stupid so they say the same thing twice in slightly different ways so that you are able to get the point? This is what Abram was doing to God; he states the same thing twice: I am childless because God did not give me a child, and therefore, the best that I have got as an heir is some person born in my household (and that person born probably to a slave). Oh, and by the way, God, did you know that I am childless because God did not give me a child, and therefore, the best that I have got as an heir is some person born in my household (and that person born probably to a slave). Abram says this as if God doesn't know the score and needs to be told twice what to do. In some relationships, I believe this is called nagging. Abram has gone from great spiritual victory in one fell swoop to being a nag.

**And behold the Word of Yahweh [came] to him saying, "This man shall not be your heir, rather that which goes out of your inward parts [will be] your own son; he shall be your heir." [Gen. 15:4]**

God makes it as clear as possible to Abram; his son, his heir, is going to come from his own loins; he will be Abram's real, physically begotten son. God has already told Abram about the number of descendants that he will have, but since Abram repeated himself, and God understood his concern the first time, God will repeat Himself because Abram obviously wasn't listening the first time.

**And He brought him outside and said, "If you would, look toward heaven and number the stars—[as] if you are able to number them," then He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." [Gen. 15:5]**

Prior to the advent of air pollution, man could look up into the sky and see a large number of stars. God does not suggest that Abram look up in the sky sometime and count the stars, but he takes Abram outside that evening, tells him to look up at the stars and then to count them (as though that were possible). God is trying to burn this promise into Abram's brain. God has presented this promise to Abram in several different ways.

**The Abram had believed Yahweh and He imputed it to him as righteousness." {Gen. 15:6}**

This is one of the most famous OT passages, quoted many times in the NT to help explain salvation. When it came to the most early portion of Scripture, salvation was taught right to begin with. *Believed* is the word *ʾâman* (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], a word that we all recognize; one that, simply means, *I believe it*. The Hiphil here affects the meaning of the verb, as it so often does. *ʾÂman* means *to confirm, to support, to nourish, to be established* and in the Hiphil it means *to stand firm, to believe, to trust*. It is generally a causative stem, but here it is the object which plays a part in the action of the verb. That is, what God said to Abram *caused* Abram to believe God. The Hiphil can also assume a reflexive sense, where the subject acts upon himself, and Abram, having heard God patiently explain to him twice about his descendants, uses his free will and believes God. Paul uses this verse twice to explain that salvation is by faith only and that this goes back even to the Old Testament (Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6) and James uses this verse to explain works after salvation; works which complete out initial salvation faith (James 2:23).

Imputed (or reckoned) is the word *châshab* (חָשַׁב) [pronounced *khaw-SHAB*<sup>v</sup>] and its basic meaning is *to weave* or *to fabricate* and it has come to mean in a figurative sense *to think, to account, to impute, to charge, to esteem to value, to regard*. It is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix. Along with this is a preposition with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffix. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular gives us the subject pronoun *he*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular gives us the object of the verb, *her* or *it*. So we look about for a feminine anything in this verse or any nearby verse, and there is none. So to what does *her* or *it* refer? One of the feminine nouns which is commonly used in Scripture which is a derivative of *ʾâman* (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*] is *ʾēmûwnâh* (אֱמוּנָה) [pronounced *eh-moo-NAWH*] and it means *firmness, steadfastness, faith, fidelity*. This faith, this steadfastness, this grip that Abram took of the promise that God gave him; this (feminine) was given by God to him (that is the preposition with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix).

I should mention, there are two masculine substantive derivatives of *aman*, but they are only used infrequently and there is another feminine derivative of *aman*, but it is not appropriate (it means *faithful*). To the untrained eye, *ʾâman* and *ʾēmûwnâh* look pretty different; however, the original Hebrew was written in all consonants (the vowel points were added by the Masorites millenniums later) so *aman* would be written *ʾmn* (אמן) and *emunah* was written *ʾmnh* (אמנה), the chief difference being the *hê* on the end and the pronunciation. This interpretation is exactly correct as Paul agrees with me in Rom. 4:3–5 (examine particularly v. 5b). The imperfect means that this is a continual process. There are different stages of growth in our Christian life. When we first believe in Jesus Christ (as Abram believe in Yahweh decades prior to Gen. 15:6), righteousness is imputed to us positionally. That is, regardless of our behavior, sins and failures, past present and future, God sees us as righteous. For OT saints, since the cross had not occurred in time yet, God *covered* their sins (Psalm 32:1–85:2); God did not see their sins; or God did not *impute* their sins to them (Psalm 32:2). However, after salvation, we have an experiential righteousness, which is based upon what we do and what we think. Abram was a believer long before this oint in time; however, he finally believed God when it came to God's promises. When we believe God, our life has experiential righteousness.

This verse occurs at least four hundred years prior to the law and perhaps a decade prior to Abram being circumcised. This means that the law played no part in Abram's righteousness and circumcision did not make Abram righteous. In this verse, prior to any of that, Abram is declared righteous. Furthermore, in the way that the verse has been set up grammatically, Abram was righteous prior to this point in time and he continues to be righteous.

**And He said to him, "I [am] the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to possess it." [Gen. 15:7]**

Sometimes for us to get a handle on our purpose, God has got to back up and show us the big picture. Abram is going to possess the land and God is going to give him enough progeny to rival the stars in sheer numbers. The land is no good without the descendants; otherwise, what good is it to Abram to own land as far as his eye can see in all four directions and to be the only person, other than his wife and servants, to live in it. On the other hand, what good is having a vast number of descendants if there is no place for them? God had a purpose for Abram; he had to separate from his father and his immediate family; he then had to separate from Lot and God took him all the way from Ur to this particular land.

**But he said, "O Lord Yahweh, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"** [Gen. 15:8]

Didn't it just say that *Abram believed God*? Notice the context; Abram has been obsessing about his descendants and God has told him at least twice that his descendants would be innumerable. Abram finally believed God with reference to this issue. Now he is concerned about the land. He has just done battle with four kings and has an uneasy alliance with five others. Abram recognizes that the battle he won was just a skirmish and did not give him the land and if he tried to take possession of it, even his uneasy alliance would turn against him.

**And He said to him, "Bring me an heifer three years old and a she-goat three years old and a ram three years old and a turtledove and a young pigeon." And he brought Him all these and cut them in two in the middle and laid each half [lit., each piece] over against the other [lit., his companion] but he did not cut the birds in two.** [Gen. 15:9–10]

This tells us that there was a rather elaborate system of sacrifice even at this time prior to the introduction of the Levitical sacrifices. We know that it was Abram's custom to offer sacrifices to Yahweh whenever he stopped and this passage seems to indicate that there was a method that did not have to be spelled out for Abram. He cuts the animals in two and leaves the birds as they are. The age of the animals perhaps corresponds to the young adult stage of the animals' life, just as our Lord was sacrificed in His young adult life.

**And when the birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.** [Gen. 15:11]

This is interesting; Abram is waiting for further instructions from God. It is possible that God has not given him instructions when it comes to this large of a sacrifice. Abram is not confused by what is occurring; he does not think that the birds of prey are messengers from God sent down to take the meat into heaven. He protects them because the sacrifices must be burned with fire, which is judgement.

**As the sun was going down and a deep sleep fell upon Abram and lo a dread, a great darkness falling upon him.** [Gen. 15:12]

This gives us a better concept of the trance-like state that Abram falls into when talking with God. This does not mean that this is the way it always occurred in the Old Testament or that this is always the way it occurred with Abram; but it is the first time that we are given some more information in terms of the mechanics. This is not, however, something which should be duplicated in the church age. There is nothing in the epistles of Paul which suggest that we need to find this trance-like state so that God can speak to us. God speaks to us through His Word and not through dreams, visions or trances. Satan is in the business of counterfeiting all God's works and he counterfeits those things now.

**Then He said to Abram, "Certainly you know that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and they will serve them [meaning that they will be slaves] and they will be oppressed four hundred years."** [Gen. 15:13]

This verse is one reason the *higher critics* believe that the Pentateuch was not written until Ezra's time or even afterward; it predicts that the Israelites will be under slavery for four hundred years. *Higher critics* have a mindset: they do not believe that it is possible for God to predict the future or that it is not possible that God has predicted the future and someone wrote it down or that it is not possible for God to have predicted the future and for this to be written down in the Bible. They are quite certain that one of those three things is true, therefore, they believe that Genesis could not have been written prior to the Exodus. Therefore, they must come up with fanciful theories which would show that Genesis was written long after the Exodus took place. In past chapters, we have shown that there are various verses and information which would not have been readily available to anyone of the Exodus generation or beyond; that there is a world and a series of cities and peoples and geographical locations described in Genesis that do not correspond to any time except **prior** to the time that it is traditionally supposed to have been written. That is, it is said that Moses wrote Genesis, although there is no quotation in the New Testament which indicates that any of the Apostles or that Jesus Christ thought that (although the other four books were certainly written by Moses and that is attested to by the Apostles and by our Lord). As I have pointed out, it is very likely



written by the men whose lives are portrayed in Genesis, whose generations are examined in Genesis, and that this was a divine document which was passed down for a millennium before it reached Moses. During that time it was very likely copied several times and there are several places where some clarification was added at a latter point in time. However, it does not appear as though the basic text was ever seriously corrupted. Moses may have acted as an editor, but I prefer to think that it was already written together as one document. I may change my mind as I delve further into the Pentateuch.

The verb *to know* is doubled here. This can give great emphasis to the verb. The first verb is in the Qal infinitive absolute, making this a verb which acts like a noun, an verb or an adverb. It could be translated, *this knowledge you know* or *certainly (or, surely), you know*. This is not in the imperative mood for the second use of the same verb, so this indicates that Abram knew this, or knew portions of this information and God is bringing it back to his thinking. The imperative mood would mean that God was ordering Abram to know this information.

God here tells Abram about the Exodus captivity and goes even further into the future in subsequent verses. This is a particularly nasty thorn to those who do not believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible. The only way to explain it is to remove the prophecy or to set all prophetic statements after the events which they describe. This certainly reveal belies the mindset of the higher critics. For others of us who are not perhaps as well-versed in rationalization as are the higher critics, we recognize that God is fully capable to predicting the future, as He invented time, and He is perfectly capable of guiding man into writing Scripture, without forsaking his personality or vocabulary or personal feelings yet still recording the very words of God, since He created man.

**"Also I will bring judgement upon the nation which they serve and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. [Gen. 15:14]**

As Moses transcribed this from the documents in his possession, we can only imagine the chills running down his back. We do not know when he copied these Scriptures, or organized them, but if he is writing this down prior to the exodus, he knows that God was speaking of his time; and if he wrote it down after the exodus, the hairs on the back of his neck certainly stood straight on end as he realized that his part in history was foreordained and that from Abram's generation on, those patriarchs knew about Moses—or rather, about God and what God would do through Moses. We have a time frame and we have what will occur after this time frame. Four hundred years does not have to be an exact time period. Having been a math teacher, when a particular measurement is made, such as the distance between two towns is measured as 10.5 miles, then that generally means that the distance is closer to 10.5 than it is to 10.4 or to 10.6. It does not mean that the towns are exactly 10.5 miles apart down to the nearest fraction of an inch. That is foolish. When rounded numbers are used, then it would be proper to say that this is approximately 400 years, even though the word approximately does not occur.

The verb *come out* is the Hebrew word *yâtsâ'* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and in the Greek, it is the word *ἐξέρχομαι* (*exerchomai*), which has the noun cognate *ἐξοδος*, which we transliterate *exodos*.

**"And, as for you, you will go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. [Gen. 15:15]**

God has not told Abram anything about himself, so He stops for a moment and tells Abram what will happen to him. What is said indicates that there was known to be a life after death of some sort and that there would be some kind of fellowship between Abram and those believers who preceded him into heaven. This could be figurative language and that *going to your fathers* is just a euphemism for death; but I prefer to think that God did not deal in euphemisms very often but in the Truth. We do have figurative language when God uses anthropomorphisms and anthropomorphisms.

**"And in the fourth generation, they shall come back here for not yet complete [is] the iniquity of the Amorites. [Gen. 15:16]**

The numbers thing had got me curious, so I worked with a few of these figures given in Scripture. We have confirmation that the amount of time spent by Israel in Egypt was approximately 400 years (Gen. 15:13 Acts 7:6),

exactly 430 years (Ex. 12:40 Gal. 3:17); four generations (Gen. 15:16 Ex. 6:16, 18, 20); each generation considered to be a little over 100 years at that time (Ex. 6:16, 18, 20); that the population began with 70 (Gen. 46:26–27) and, at the exodus, was approximately 2 million, when women and children are accounted for (Ex. 12:37 38:26). This means that in the space of 430 years, 13 families had to grow into 2 million people. Certainly some people might wonder about this, whether such a thing is humanly possible. This means we need to have a doubling of the population every 25–30 years. This is not difficult to do. This would mean that every 25–30 years each family must have an average of two children. Given that a person would live perhaps 100 years on the average (actually, they lived slightly longer) this would mean that each family would need to average 6–8 children in order for these numbers to be correct. In an era prior to contraceptives this is not an unusual family size. For those who have trouble with mathematics, this does not mean that there are just four generations of Jews who left Egypt; the firstborn of firstborns of firstborns would be born every 20 to 30 years, giving us some people in Egypt who are in the 80<sup>th</sup> generation.

God's plan for the Jews did not exclude the Gentiles. Abram is still a Gentile and he has picked up several people who are from other family lines and other races. God always evangelized other groups of people (one example is Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, who was obviously a believer; see Ex. 2:16 3:1 18). The Jews themselves were to evangelize, even as we the church are to evangelize. The Amorites (which is a designation which occasionally stands for all of the inhabitants of the land of Palestine) apparently had some people who were believers, who were positive toward God's Word and some who would be responsive to evangelization. God is not going to destroy a people if there are a few who have reached the age of accountability who will believe in Jesus Christ but have not yet. It only requires a very small number of believers in a population to spare that population (we will see this in Gen. 18:20–19:29).

**When it had come to pass that the sun had gone down and it was dark, there a fire pot smoking and a torch passed between these pieces. In that day that God with Abram made a covenant saying, "your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt to the great river—the Euphrates river... [Gen. 15:18–19]**

It is God's fire which burns the sacrifices, as it is God's judgement which is laid upon God the Son. In this very elaborate sacrifice, God comes and speaks to Abram, who is not yet fully mature, but he is moving in the right direction. We would guess that Abram observed this fire passing through the midst of his sacrifices since he records it and perhaps this is the sign that God gave him that he would possess the land. Abram asked for some confirmation that he would be given the land in Gen. 15:8 and this is sandwiched between God promising the land to Abram. The portion which is given to him is much larger than any past or present day Israel. In today's world, this would include part of Egypt, all of Israel, Jordan Lebanon, and much of Syria, Iraq, and all or part of Saudi Arabia. This chunk of real estate would measure 800 x 800 (to up to 1400) miles.

**"the Kenite, and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girashite and the Jebusite." [Gen. 15:19–21]**

God here lists the inhabitants of the land up to this point. It is listed by races which occupy the area and not by cities. Some of these we have dealt with before and some we have not. This portion tells us which groups of people originally settled in Palestine.

**The Kenites:** The term possibly means *metalworkers* or *smiths* and it could be a descriptive term rather than a family name. The sons of Lamech were involved in these activities and they might be the Kenites (Gen. 4:19–22). However, the first mention of this grouping by name is in this passage. The Kenites were descended from the Midianites (Num. 10:29 Judges 1:16 4:11). Like many races, there were good (1Sam. 15:6) and bad (Num. 24:21–22) among them. Moses father-in-law was a Kenite (Judges 1:16). With the several references throughout the Old Testament, it is obvious that the Kenites broke up into many separate families and nomadic groups. Some even became Scribes (1Chron. 2:55) after the exile.

There are only a few things that we can probably state about the Kenites: they were a loose group of nomadic peoples who probably worked with metals and were originally associated with and possibly related to the

Midianites. Although they first settled in Midian (insofar as we know), some of them moved into Judah and then later into the Galilee area. Their relations with Israel appear to have always been peaceful and congenial. Even though they are said to be given into the hands of Abram back in Gen. 15:18–19, their subjugation to Israel appears to be voluntary and not in the sense of being enslaved to the Israelites. There is nothing in the phrasing of this passage of Genesis to indicate that Israel would militarily conquer this people.

**The Kenizzites:** This group descended from Eliphaz, the oldest son of Esau (Gen. 36:11,15,42). Even though the implication from this passage is that they were to be evicted from the land by Israel, some of them were evangelized and became great believers, such as Caleb (Num. 32:12).

**The Kadmonites:** The Kadmonites are found here, by this name, only. However, their name is identical to the adjective which means eastern, so it is possible that they are also found in Job 1:3 (this means that Job was possibly a Kadmonite; which would help fix a date on Job as somewhere during this time period); Judg. 8:10–12; and in 1Kings 4:30–31 (where their wisdom is compared to Solomon's).

**The Perizzites:** The Perizzites are mentioned many times in Scripture as occupants of the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:20 Ex. 3:8 Deut. 7:1 20:17 Josh. 3:10 9:1 Judg. 3:5 1Kings 9:20 etc.). We do not know their racial origins, but they seem to be distinguished from the Canaanites (Gen. 13:7). One theory is that they are equivalent to the Amorites, making them eastern Semitics which would make the Canaanites western Semitics (however, Ex. 3:8, 17 would not support this view). There is another view that this is a general name for those who live in villages.

**The Rephaim:** They are one of the groups of peoples who had been defeated by Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14:5). They seemed to live in a rather large area, just east of the Salt Sea, and their name is translated *giants* by the LXX. In later Scripture, their name is identified with the dead and with Sheol (Psalm 88:10 Prov. 2:18 9:18 Isa. 14:9 26:14). It is possible that we simply do not know the origins of this people and that they are simply identified as giants. In fact, it is even reasonable that this name could apply to any group of particularly tall people. The Hittites are covered in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse study of this chapter: **Genesis 15 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)**.

Note that in this passage, Abram is not told that they will drive these races out of the land; these just happen to be the occupants of the promised land.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

**Genesis 16** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 16

### Genesis 16:1–16

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

#### v. 7 [The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 16 shows a lapse in Abram's judgement. He decides, with the help of his wife, that in order to fulfill God's promise, he will have to have children by other women. This is a mistake and application of doctrine would have saved Abram from this error of judgement. God went to great pains to rescue Sarai from the Egyptian Pharaoh back in Gen. 12. He has also promised Abram specifically that a son would come from his loins and that his progeny would be uncountable (Gen. 15:4). For these reasons, Abram is doing nothing but bringing himself and his future race trouble by a few wrong decisions. Having made many wrong decisions in my youth and during the early portion of my spiritual life, I can testify that a simple mistake or error in judgement way back when can have devastating results which last for decades. Whereas all bad decisions do not result in devastating results, many result in negative results that last for decades. God's grace can overcome all of this, but let's face it, it is easier to not touch a stove when we are told that it is hot than it is to touch the stove and have mom kiss the burned fingers.

**Now Sarai, the wife of Abram, bore him no children. However, she did have a maid, an Egyptian and her name [was] Hagar.** [Gen. 16:1]

There are three waw conjunctions here which I have translated *now...however...and*. The KJV translated them *now...and...[nothing]* as did the NASB. The Amplified Bible and the NRSV only translate the first waw conjunction. It is the same conjunction in the Hebrew which continues the train of thought. Although different vowel points will be used, this is more dependant upon the following consonant rather than the meaning of the conjunction. In English, it would become boring to continually use *and* when that may not be the intention of the waw conjunction to begin with. Some of the conjunctions which could be used would be *and, but, now, furthermore, however, and [nothing]*.

God has not told Abram specifically that the child would be born through Sarai; Abram could have pieced that bit of information together on his own because of what happened in Egypt. However, while in Egypt, they happened to pick up Little Egypt (as Thieme was wont to say), Hagar. She was probably a gift to Sarai from the pharaoh of Egypt who tried to take her to wife. She was likely young, attractive and intelligent. Sarai is about to suggest something which falls outside of God's plan which will cause her a great deal of pain.

Hagar is a type of the law and bondage whereas Sarah typifies the promise of God through grace. Hagar will bear Abram a child through human viewpoint and human works. This is dealt with in Gal. 4, then end of the chapter. This will be covered with a skosh more detail in the doctrine of Ishmael.

**So Sarai said to Abram, "Please listen: Yahweh has prevented me from bearing children so please go in to my maid so that I shall obtain children [lit., I shall be built up] by her. So Abram listened [and obeyed] the voice of Sarai.** [Gen. 16:2]

Between 1925 and 1931, the University of Pennsylvania, with the assistance and cooperation of the Semitic Museum, Harvard and American Schools for Oriental research, spearheaded an archeological dig in Nuzi (Yorhhan Tepe) in Iraq. In one area, they uncovered 20,000 clay tablets in the ruins of a palace and in private homes; the tablets being written in cuneiform script in a Babylonian dialect. The tablets covered four or five generations all from circa 15th-14th centuries B.C. There were found the complete archives of a particular prince and the records and library of a successful business woman, among others. In the tablets were some which dealt with inheritance. If a man should be childless, it was allowed that he could adopt a son from outside the family, not unlike Abram's adoption of Eliezer (Gen. 15:2-4). Another solution to the problem of a lack of progeny was for a childless wife could allow her husband a slave as a mistress to bear children. According to the ZPEB, it was obligatory for a barren wife to provide her husband with a slave woman in order to bear children. Furthermore, under that law, the children would be under the supervision of the wife and not of the slave which bore them.

Hammurabi's Code, ¶ 146, gives us another parallel; it asserts, in particular cases, that the slave woman who has borne children, may not assert herself over against the unproductive wife. She may not usurp the wife's position or achieve equality with the wife in this situation.

What is going to happen is pure rationalization; Abram is being offered the chance to sleep with another woman and he is given the opportunity to have the children he desires. Rather than think this through with the doctrine that he has, he decides that this is so easy and so simple and his wife herself has suggested it, so it must be God's will. Not everything which seems to fall into place and seems so easy to do is God's will. Abram, as has been explained, knows enough to realize that he is outside of God's will. God will fulfill His promises and He does not need any shortcut method in order to do so. Abram is going to have hell on earth under his own roof. One woman under one roof is difficult enough; two women, under these circumstances, is nearly impossible.

Sarai, prior to the act of conception, sounds as though she is thoroughly modern and grown up about this. However, she is going to have a great many negative feelings which will result from this. She will feel betrayed by Abram and betrayed by Hagar; she will be jealous of Abram's fling and jealous of Hagar's ability to bear a child; she will be angry with herself for suggesting such a thing. Certainly, Abram will ask occasionally, "What's wrong, honey?" usually right before Sarai reads him the riot act. If you are confused as to how Sarai could suggest this and then blame Abram and Hagar and feel bitter about them going through with her idea; if this confuses you, then you obviously have only male friends.

**And after Abram had dwelt in Canaan for ten years, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, the Egyptian, her maid, and have her to her husband Abram as his mistress. [Gen. 16:3]**

We do not know the time frame between chapters 15 and 16. However, between the end of chapter 12 and the beginning of 16, ten years have passed. Abram went to Egypt, things did not work out, so he returned to the promised land. He and Lot decided to part company and Abram got into a war with four kings in order to rescue Lot. After this great victory over the kings and particularly over the king of Sodom and his suggestion, God comes to Abram again and renews His promise concerning the son and concerning the land. These events had to take a few years; at least three. Another three or so may have passed where nothing was recorded, so we could guess that since God promised Abram a son and his land, approximately three or more years have passed. This has given Abram enough time to ponder god's promises and wonder how true they might be.

This suggestion of Sarai's does not violate any established moral code, insofar as we know. God set up a precedent of right man and right woman, and Abram and Sarai have fulfilled that, but we do not know whether God has specifically established monogamy. What is occurring here is progressive divine revelation. That is, God has not revealed His entire plan to anyone even for that dispensation. In fact, until the OT canon was completed, there was a great deal of visions and Urim and Thummim and visitations by the angel of the Lord, etc. These things are unknown to us in our day, outside of mental institutions. Because man cannot believe that the world could be any different over a passage of time, man does not like to believe that either (1) there were visions and direct revelations from God in the past; and others do not want to believe that (2) these visions and revelations have stopped. However, we have already discussed that Abram should know that his seed will be raised up in Sarai.

**And he went in to Hagar and she conceived; and when she [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress was depreciated in her sight. [Gen. 16:4]**

*Went in* means *to have sex* and is in the Qal imperfect, meaning that it occurred several times. Conceived is in the Qal perfect tense; it only had to happen once. Suddenly, Hagar gets an attitude. The verb is the Hebrew word *qâlal* (קָלַל) [pronounced *kaw-LAL*] and it means ❶ *to be diminished* (note the passive meaning); ❷ *to be despised, to be contemned* (again, a passive meaning); ❸ *to be light, to be trifling, to be of little account*; ❹ *to be swift, to be fleet*; ❺ *to be lightly esteemed*. *Qâlal* is in the Qal imperfect tense; Hagar continually depreciated Sarai. Hagar was her slave, her inferior, and now there was something that Hagar could do that Sarai could not do; Hagar could provide a child for her man. Hagar could have been the most innocent one of the trio. She is a slave and as a slave must do what she is told to do by her masters. Both Sarai and Abram laid down the law that she was to have sex with Abram so she was obeying. However, now she filled herself with mental attitude sins of pride and she belittled her mistress, Sarai.

**And Sarai continued to say to Abram, "The wrong [done] to me [let it be] upon you. I gave my maid to your embrace and when she saw that she had conceived, I was belittled in her eyes. Yahweh judge between you and me." [Gen. 16:5]**

*Was belittled* is the same Hebrew word as *depreciated* in the previous verse. Now, Sarai is upset. She is jealous of the adultery which took place; she is jealous that Hagar is fertile and will bear Abram a child, something that she has been unable to do. She recognizes Hagar's haughtiness and air of superiority due to this. Hagar has always been the inferior, being a slave, and Sarai, as the mistress, the wife of a very wealthy and successful businessman and now her peon slave can do what she has been unable to do for the past several decades: give Abram a child. Abram is the only one who perhaps is not filled with mental attitude sins, however, what he did has filled his household with misery. One woman expressing her emotion with mental attitude sins is difficult enough; Abram now has two women who have become spiteful towards one another and it will be hell on earth for all three of them under the same roof. Abram does not want to deal with the headache. He is going to throw it back into his wife's lap. He should be a man and take charge at this point. He should have thought through Sarai's original plan first, but it is too late for that. Now that he has screwed up his household by obeying his wife, it is time for him to go into action as the head of the household and to solve the problem fairly between the two women. He passes the buck back to the person whose idea this all was in the first place.

**Then Abram said to Sarai, "Observe, your maid in your power [lit., in your hands]: do to her as you please [lit., according to what is right in your eyes]. Then Sarai dealt harshly with her and she [Hagar] fled from her. [Gen. 16:6]**

Abram has basically given Sarai carte blanc to express her mental attitude sins in any way that she feels. Abram is wrongly taking a step back, telling Sarai that this is a problem between her and her maid; he is not going to become involved and, since Sarai is the mistress, she can do whatever she would like to her slave, Hagar. Given the limits of her mental attitude, this is great news to Sarai and she proceeds to make Hagar's life a living hell. When you have two women under the same roof who are sleeping with the same man and these women have no restraints put upon their old sin natures, then it is apropos to describe the lives of everyone under that roof as hell on earth. Sarai was so vicious, so temperamental, so thoughtless in her treatment of Hagar, Hagar fled. Hagar is totally without resources, she is helpless, she is pregnant but Sarai made her life so miserable that she had no choice but to book it on out of there. No matter what, their lives would have been miserable as soon as Abram consented to Sarai's plan; however, Hagar's mental attitude toward Sarai just fueled the fire. If she did not develop this attitude of superiority over a fertile womb, something over which she has no control; something which is totally the grace of God, then the household difficulties could have been minimized somewhat (although Sarai would have still been filled with mental attitude sins). One positive note: since Hagar lived under the roof of Abram and Sarai, she became a believer in Jesus Christ. She had a personal relationship with the God of the universe, the God of Adam, of Noah, of Melchizedek. Because of that, Jesus Christ came to her.

**The Angel of Yahweh found her by the spring of water in the desert; the spring on the way to Shur. [Gen. 16:7]**

Since Hagar is Egyptian, the direction that she would flee would naturally be toward her country of Egypt. *The way to Shur* is likely an established highway or roadway which is perhaps a continuation of the King's Highway and/or a caravan route from the King's Highway to Egypt, traveling through Edom and the desert of Shur. Hagar is a relatively bright woman. She is not an ignorant slave woman; otherwise, Sarai would not have kept her as her own personal slave. She knows which direction to go in and knows a route to take. She just does not burst into tears and runs in any direction.

This is the first mention in the OT of the angel, or the messenger, of Yahweh. The Angel of the Lord is Jesus Christ. He is the revealed member of the Godhead. Prior to the incarnation, Jesus Christ reveals Himself to man in several ways: as God in the garden, as an angel, as a man, as a burning bush, in dreams, etc. See the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

We know that Hagar is a believer in Jesus Christ because He comes to her while she is running away. She is in a hopeless state. The trek to Egypt is long and arduous. Prior to this, she made it as not pregnant and as a part of a caravan where her needs were all seen to. Now she is pregnant, possibly sick; very moody, upset, weak and on her own for a long walk along the desert. She perhaps knows where some of the springs are along the way, and knows this way since she came with Abram's caravan a decade earlier. We do not know if she was praying to our Lord or what was going through her mind.

This is taken from the **Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah

1. The Angel of the Lord is one of the preincarnate forms of Jesus Christ.
2. There are actually several names for the Angel of Jehovah, all of which are related to divine designations:
  - 1) The Angel (Messenger, representative, one sent) of Jehovah. Gen. 16:7
  - 2) The Angel of God. Gen. 21:17 31:11 21:17 Ex.14:19 Judges 6:20
  - 3) The Angel (Messenger) who has redeemed me. Gen. 48:16
  - 4) The Angel (Messenger) of His Presence (Face). Isa. 63:9
  - 5) The Angel of the Covenant. Mal. 3:1
  - 6) The Destroying Angel. 1Chron. 21:15 2Sam. 24:16
3. The Angel of Jehovah is identified as Jehovah. Gen. 16:7-13 21:17-18 22:11-18 31:11-13 48:15,16 Ex. 3:2 cf. Acts 7:30-35 Ex. 13:21 14:19 Judges.2:1-4 5:23 6:11-23 13:3-22 2Sam. 24:16 Zech. 1:12-13.
  - 1) Genesis 22:11-12 *But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*
  - 2) Genesis 31:11, 13 *"Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' 'I am the God {of} Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.' "*
  - 3) Exodus 3:2-4 *And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."*
4. The Angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah. Gen. 24:7 40 Ex. 23:20 32:34 Num. 20:16 1Chron. 21:15-18 Isa. 63:9 Zech. 1:12-13.
  - 1) Exodus 32:34 *"But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin."*
  - 2) Isaiah 63:9 *In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them; and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.*
  - 3) Zechariah 1:12-13 *Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt Thou have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which Thou hast been indignant*

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah

- these seventy years?" And the LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words.
5. The Angel of Jehovah does the works of God.
    - 1) He provides a substitutionary sacrifice for Abram and blesses Abraham, confirming promises given to him by God. Gen. 22:11–18
    - 2) The Angel of Jehovah imposes God's will upon Balaam in Num. 22:22–35
    - 3) The Angel of the Lord becomes the Savior of Israel as well as their Redeemer. Isa. 63:8–9 He [God] said, "They are indeed My people, children who will not be disloyal," and He became their Savior. In all their suffering, He suffered, and the Angel of His Presence saved them. He redeemed them because of His love and compassion; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of the past. Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, Who has given Himself as our ransom. Matt. 20:28 Col. 1:14
  6. Therefore, the Angel of Jehovah is the Second Person of the Trinity. John 1:18 6:46 2Cor. 4:4 Col. 1:15 1Tim. 6:16 Heb. 1:1–2 1John 4:12.
    - 1) The Second Person of the Trinity is the visible God of the New Testament.
      - (1) John 1:18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God [Jesus Christ the Son], who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}
      - (2) John 6:46 "Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One [Jesus Christ] who is from God; He has seen the Father.
      - (3) 1John 4:12a No one has beheld God at any time;
    - 2) The Angel of Jehovah never appears after the Incarnation. Note that Acts 12:7, 11 is not a reference to the Angel of Jehovah but to "an angel" from the Lord (Jesus Christ). (cf. Col. 3:1)
    - 3) Both the Angel of Jehovah and Jesus Christ are sent by the Father. Gen. 24:7 Ex. 23:20 Num. 20:16 Dan. 3:25, 28 6:22 John 3:17 6:44 John 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25 1John 4:14
    - 4) Since neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit can be seen by man (John 1:18 John 4:24 3:8), and since Jesus Christ has been seen (John 1:14 John 18b; 14:9), it is concluded that Jesus Christ is the Angel of Jehovah or the visible member of the Godhead in the Old Testament.
  7. Other pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament which are not specifically spoken of as the Angel of Jehovah:
    - 1) ...the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) walking in the garden... Gen. 3:8
    - 2) ...a man wrestled with him (Jacob)... Gen. 32:24-32;
    - 3) ...the Lord appeared to Abram... Gen. 17:1-22; 18:1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 17-33
    - 4) ...a man (captain of the army, or host, of Jehovah)...with his sword drawn... Joshua 5:13-15 6:1–2
    - 5) The destroying angel, most likely the Angel of the Lord in 1 Chron. 21:15
    - 6) ...a man riding on a red horse... from Zech. 1:8-12
    - 7) ...a certain man dressed in linen... Dan. 10:5-9 12:6-13; cf. Ezek. 1:26-28 Rev. 1:12-20

This originally came from Gen. 16:7

### Bibliography:

Basic doctrine is taken from [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=28](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=28) which are probably notes taken from R. B. Thieme, Jr. and from

<http://www.swordofthespiritbibleministries.com/images/simplelists//NOTESAF/Angel%20of%20Jehovah.pdf>  
<http://www.portlandbiblechurch.com/DoctrineFolder/DOCTRINE%20OF%20THE%20ANGEL%20OF%20JEHOVAH.pdf>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Then He said, "Hagar, maid of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she answered, "I am fleeing from Sarai my mistress." [Gen. 16:8]**

I do not recall if there is an OT conversation which was begun by man speaking to God...it seems as though it is always God who speaks to man first. At least up to this point in time. God, in His grace, has established



fellowship with her, as He did when Adam and Eve had sinned in the garden, and it seems that when an OT saint was out of fellowship and God chose to speak, it would always be in the form of a question. To Abram and Noah, two men who were generally in fellowship and growing, God began speaking to them in imperatives; revealing more of His plan and direction to them. However, when a believer is out of fellowship, God begins by asking them questions. Her human relationship is brought into question and her direction in life. Hagar only answers the first question.

**The angel of Yahweh said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit yourself to her [literally, under her hands]." [Gen. 16:9]**

Nowhere in the Bible does God indicate that slavery is an inhuman evil which we as mankind should work to erase. There is only one time when it is implied that slavery is not the best way of doing things. In the book of Philemon, Onesimus is a runaway slave who is also a believer. When he comes into contact with Paul in the Mamertine Dungeon, Paul convinced Onesimus to return to his master and to submit to his authority. He also urges his master to set Onesimus free. But note carefully: whereas Paul issued many mandates to individual believers and to churches, Paul did not issue a mandate to Philemon to give Onesimus his freedom; that was a request. The Mosaic law will set up certain laws regarding slavery. This is a hard pill to swallow in a country where most people believe that we fought a vicious, awful civil war over slavery, where believers on both sides of the issue were killed. It is a tough pill to swallow for those who still feel guilty because of what their ancestors did and others who feel entitled because their ancestors had been enslaved. Notice carefully: Y<sup>e</sup>howah does not say, "Keep running, Hagar. You shouldn't be enslaved to begin with and she is treating you terribly; keep running and I will protect you."

**Application:** There was a point in my life where I had been under terrible circumstances where I worked and it seemed as though the only reasonable solution would be to flee this job and get a job elsewhere. How often is it that people change jobs to find themselves a better environment; people with whom they will get along better; superiors which they agree with more often. During this period of time, when I was contemplating leaving and calling around concerning other positions, my pastor was teaching that it is not enough of a reason to leave a job just because the working conditions were poor or your superior was unjust, unlikeable and/or disliked you. For that reason, I continued my search with a lot less vigor, being open to move if that was God's will, but being willing to stay if that was God's will. I stayed and was blessed and prospered at that job by God. The difficult circumstances and the personality conflict which I had disappeared eventually, and these conditions were replaced by a new set of pressures and problems. In retrospect, it was God's will that I remained and it was to my benefit that I did not pack up and move to another position elsewhere. Hagar is in an unfair, unjust situation that she has run from. What is the solution offered her by the God of the universe: go back to it!

**Application:** Don't ever leave a situation just because it is difficult. Along the same lines, I recall that my parents had problems early in their marriage, before I was born. They had separated either several months of a year or so into their marriage over difficult circumstances. This, I found out about much later in life, I believe after my father had passed away. My memories of my parents was of a couple who were happy together and who loved each other very much; for whom there was perhaps no one else on earth that they would love as much as each other. When I was old enough to recognize this, I was in my late teens or early twenties, and I could see it in everything that my father did and through the many things which my mother said. What a tragedy for them both had they called it quits because they were under some difficult circumstances. God unequivocally told Hagar to return to her mistress. As God spoke to me when I was contemplating leaving my job due to difficult circumstances, somehow, I know that God is speaking to someone else also in a difficult, unjust situation.

**Furthermore the Angel of Yahweh said to her, "So greatly will I multiply your descendants that they cannot be counted for [their] multitude." [Gen. 16:10]**

What has happened due to Abram and Sarai's unbelief cannot be reversed without God altering the free will choices of man. Hagar's child, Ishmael, will be born in Abram's household and this verse will be fulfilled.

As Scofield points out: *Ishmael...was the progenitor of the Arabs, the traditional enemies of the Jewish people. Moreover Mohammed, the founder of Islam, whose adherents form Christianity's most difficult missionary problem, came from the line of Ishmael. Islam is the world religion which is, perhaps, closest to Christianity; thus it is the hardest to penetrate with the Gospel of Christ.*<sup>52</sup>

**Then the Angel of Yahweh said to her, "Observe that you are with child and you will bear a son and you will call his name Ishmael because Yahweh has heard [and responded] to your affliction." [Gen. 16:11]**

Shâma' (שמע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*] means *to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of.* The verb is in the Qal perfect, meaning that God heard this and made provision for this situation in eternity past as a part of His eternal decrees.

*Ishmael* is the Hebrew word Yish<sup>e</sup>mâ'êl (ישמעאל) [pronounced *yish-maw-GALE*], which is a composite of the words shâma' and el (God) and it therefore means *whom God hears; God is hearing.* The slight difference in spelling is that shama is the vocabulary form and in the Qal perfect. The yodh changes this verb to a Qal imperfect and is almost letter for letter the same as Ishmael.

God tells Hagar to return, but He tells her that he has heard and He knows about her affliction, and that He has made provision for that affliction. God continues to tell Hagar what will become of her son:

**"He shall be a wild ass of a man, his hand [will be] against every man and every man's hand against him and he shall dwell over against [or, in defiance of or, in the face of] all his kinsmen. [Gen. 16:12]**

As a wild ass of a man, Ishmael would wander the desert and the hills without having a permanent home. This is seen in Gen. 21:20–21 (and cp Job 39:5–8).

Is it any wonder that the higher critics do not want to believe that this record was made prior to the time of the Maccabeans? God is writing history centuries and millenniums before it occurs. Many of the Arabic peoples came from Ishmael and have always dwelt near the promised land and have always been a thorn in the side of the Jews. There is no group of peoples which is so consistently defiant and so consistently negative toward the Jews, and vice versa as the various Arabic races and nations.

*Clark's Commentary*<sup>53</sup> reads: *Nothing can be more descriptive of the wandering, lawless, freebooting life of the Arabs than this. From the beginning to the present they have kept their independence, and God preserves them as a lasting monument of His providential care and an incontestable argument of the truth of divine revelation. Had the books of Moses no other proof of their divine origin, the account of Ishmael and the prophecy concerning his descendants during a period of nearly 4,000 years, would be sufficient. To attempt to refute it would be most ridiculous presumption and folly.*

A reasonable question would be *why?* Why would God allow a race of people to multiply from this one woman; a race which would cause the Jews untold pain and suffering. Why were not these peoples thrown from the land, dispersed by Israel, or, better yet, killed, every man, woman and child. They and their progeny are on the whole extremely negative toward God's Word and God's people. Why has God not only allowed them to live, but the multiply to uncountable numbers? Hagar is a believer in Jesus Christ; the beginning of v. 13 tells us that. God appeared to her; in general, God appears to believers. One of the truths of Scripture is blessing by association, which can extend to friendship, geographical area, govern entities (cities, states, countries), and family. Hagar is a believer and Abram is one of the greatest believers of all time. Because of this, their progeny, despite their

<sup>52</sup> *Scofield Bible*, p. 25

<sup>53</sup> I am quoting *to the Amplified Bible*, p. 18

own negativity, are kept alive and even, to a certain extent, prospered. Only the Jews, as a race, have seen a greater display of God's grace.

The translations for the next verse vary quite a bit.

The NASB reads: *Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "Thou art a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"*

However, NASB gives two alternate translations all incorporated into the following reading of v. 13: *Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "Thou, God, dost see me." for she said, "Have I even seen here after the one who saw?"*

The NRSV reads: *So she named the Lord who spoke to her. "You are El-roi"; for she said, "Have I really see God and remained alive after seeing him?"*

*The Emphasized Bible reads: And she called the name of Yahweh, who had spoke unto her, "Thou God of vision!" For she said, "Do I even here retain my vision after a vision?"*

As you can see, there is quite a difference of readings of this verse.

The end of Gen. 12:8 and the beginning of this verse are identical, except that v. 8 has the masculine singular associated with the verb whereas this verse has the feminine singular. Therefore, Hagar was not naming God anything. She was calling upon Him as believers do when in a jam and as believers do in worship. This is in the Qal imperfect, meaning that she did not call upon God once, but several times, as did Abram in the parallel citation. *Who spoke to her* is a definite article plus the Qal active participle of *to speak* and a preposition with the third person, feminine singular suffix. A participle is a verb used as an adjectival noun. In this case, it is a descriptor of Yahweh. She was aware that Abram called upon God's name and had face to face conversations with the Almighty. Because Abram was so rich and powerful in her eyes, Hagar expected that a man of this stature and of such a high spiritual character would be able to speak to God. However, she is a slave, a runaway slave, and a slave who is pregnant and helpless. It would not occur to her that God is interested in her and she would never presume to ever speak to God. Furthermore, this is the first recorded instance of God speaking to a woman since the expulsion from the garden.

She begins by saying *You Yahweh*, but then the noun יוֹרֵא (יאר) [pronounced *row-EE*], a word used rather infrequently in the OT. This word is found twice in this verse, and in 1Sam. 16:12, Job 33:21 and Nah. 3:6. In Job, the passage is dealing with discipline and it reads *Their flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen*. In 1Samuel, the passage speaks of David: *He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes and had a pleasant appearance*. In Nah. 3:6, God is pronouncing judgement (upon Ninevah?) and He says, *"And I will throw upon you filth and I will treat you with contempt and I will make you as a spectacle."* Note that in every case, we are not speaking of a vision of anything ethereal or of the eyes but of **something which can be seen**. Therefore, this passage should read: *"You, Yahweh, [are] visible."* She is beside herself, so that, if she were speaking in more complete sentences, she might have said, *"You, Yahweh, are a visible God."* She might have said, *"You, God are real and visible."* She has never seen God before and the most that she knows is what Abram has said; and through him, she became a believer; but she is totally beside herself that Yahweh has made Himself visible to her. This is an exclamation. It is: *"You God visible!"*

**So she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her. "You [are] a God [who is] visible."**

[Gen. 16:13a]

The conjunction following the first quote is *kîy* (כי) [pronounced *kee*] is a causal conjunction and can be translated by the words *but, certainly, doubtless, now, because, in that, seeing, since, for*. This conjunction is followed by the Qal perfect of *she said*. This can be an antecedent for a consequent causal relationship. The verses are not separated by God but by man. This really belongs to v. 14 (because of the *therefore* which begins that verse). This should read: *since she had said*.

Then what she said is also a matter of several opinions. Her quote begins with two adverbs. *Gam* (גם) [pronounced *gahm*] is a correlative adverb and it can be translated *also, even, though*. It is from an unused root

which is related to gathering or assembling. The next adverb is *hālôm* (הֵלֹם) [pronounced *huh-LOHM*] and it means *here*.

We then have the same verb used twice separated by a preposition. That verb means *to see* and it is first found in the Qal perfect, 1<sup>st</sup> person common singular and then in the Qal active participle, masculine singular with a 1st person common singular suffix. Between these words is the preposition *'achărêy* (אַחֲרַי) [pronounced *ah-kuh-RAY*] and it means *after, from behind, afterward, after that*. This can be used in relationship to time. Literally it means, *even here I have seen after him seeing me*. In my translation, I have added the *him* because of the masculine singular on the second verb; I would think that it is implied here.

V. 14 is a continuation of v. 13b and it is a play on words from v. 13a. V. 14 begins with a preposition and an adverb, translated *wherefore* in the KJV and therefore in the NASB. The preposition is *'al* (עַל) [pronounced *gah]* means *above, over upon, against* and the connotation is a downward aspect to it (even in the translation *against*). The adverb is one that we have covered before, *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], and it means *so*. Both words are found together in Gen. 20:6b 42:21b and in many other places. Literally, we would translate this *upon so*, but that makes very little sense. It is translated *upon the ground of such conditions* or, quite simply *therefore* and is often used when citing the origin of a name, custom or proverb. We will translate it *on this account*. *Was called* is obviously the passive voice but we do not have the passive stem. The verb from Gen. 16:13a is found again, the word *qârâ'* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] and it can be *to call, to summon, to proclaim*. Here it is in the Qal perfect masculine singular, so it would be translated *he had called* or *he had proclaimed*. *Well* is preceded by the definite article lamed *l* as a prefixed preposition. This indicates the indirect object of a verb or the direction towards an object.

The designation of the well is *Beer-lachairoi*. The first word means *well*; the second might mean *the living* (it is an adjective possibly with a lamedh prefix); and the last word we just translated as *him seeing me*. The translation of the designation would be *the well of the living; him seeing me*. The latter part of the verse gives its location, and I have got to come up with a reasonable translation for *behold* or *lo*, both of which sound horribly archaic. This demonstrative particle is also translated *of a certainty, surely*. I wonder if *it is* or *this is* might fit the bill, convey the meaning, and not sound so goofy.

**Because she had said, "I have seen [him] after him seeing me." On this account, he called the well Beer-lachairoi [translated: The Well; the Living; Him Seeing Me]. It is between Kadesh and Bered. [Gen. 16:13b-14]**

I think that we can infer that Hagar has been a believer for some time because:

- She was Sarai's personal maid, and even though Sarai does not always demonstrate the virtues of Christian maturity, she is still a believer and the source of Israel.
- God came to Hagar and spoke to her
- Hagar called upon the name of the Lord
- V. 13b says that she has seen and she has been seen; that is, she has seen God after God has seen her
- She will obey God's command

On the other hand, she demonstrated mental attitude sins toward Sarai in Gen. 16:5b, which were unnecessary and exercising some restraint and some humility may have smoothed over this situation. Also, her son, Ishmael, and his progeny, will reveal a predilection for mental attitude sins (Gen. 16:12). This does not mean that they were unbelievers but it reveals the destructiveness of mental attitude sins.

The geographical clues in v. 14b are of less help to us than v. 7; which tells us where all three places are. In the future, it may be of significance to archeologists to locate Bered.

**So Hagar bore Abram a son and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. And Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. [Gen. 16:15–16]**

Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of Ishmael**.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---

## Several Chapters of Genesis Have Been Expanded and Moved Here

**Genesis 16** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   **Genesis 17** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   **Genesis 18** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))  
Genesis 19 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 20 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 21 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))  
Genesis 22 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 23 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 24 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))  
Genesis 25 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 26 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 27 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))  
Genesis 28 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 29 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 30 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))  
Genesis 31 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 32 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))   Genesis 33 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))

**Genesis 17** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

# Genesis 17

## Genesis 17:1–27

### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

v. 8      [A Comparison and Contrast Between Israel and the Church](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 17 takes place 13 years after Gen. 16. Abram raises Ishmael, his son by Hagar, his wife's personal slave girl. Abram becomes quite naturally fond of him. Sarai will continue to bear some animosity for him and his mother until he is removed from the household. Abram has experienced great spiritual growth during this period of time and will now be used by God in most marvelous ways throughout the next few chapters. God first asks for a demonstration of Abram's faith, an outward sign of his being regenerated. He is to cut off the foreskin of his penis, which represents the beginning of his new line, his spiritual seed, his line of the promise and the grace of God. As any man would tell you, at age 99, this represents a tremendous step of faith. The majority of this chapter is God making promises to Abraham and Abraham fulfilling God's mandates.

**When Abraham became 99 years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, "I [am] God [the] All-sufficient (El Shaddai). Walk before me [conduct your life as you are in my presence] and be [spiritually] mature [and complete] [having integrity]." [Gen. 17:1]**

*God All-sufficient* here is two words, the first being 'Ēl (אֱל) [pronounced *ALE*], a word which has four or five entirely different meanings and several sub-usages within those categories of meanings. One usage has to do with strength and might, and in this regard, can refer to any deity; i.e., the God of the Universe or pagan gods (Isa. 43:10 44:10, 15, 17). It is rarely used alone and can refer to *mighty ones* (a reference to *men* or to *angels*—Ex. 31:11 Isa. 9:6 29:1 89:7) as well as to God (Gen. 31:13 35:1, 3). The second word in this title is Shadday (שַׁדַּי) [pronounced *shahd-DAH-ee*] and it means (*self-*) *sufficient, almighty, many-breasted* and here it would be best translated *All-Sufficient*. This is the first instance in the Bible where this title is used. We do not know if God uses it first of Himself here or whether it was a title for our Lord just not put into Scripture until now. This designation for our Lord is found 31 times in Job, which is coterminous with this narrative. God will renew His covenant with Abram, both for possession of the land of Canaan and for the multitude of his descendants.

Abram is 99 and sexually dead; his wife has been infertile for at least the entirety of their marriage. This is the most apropos place to introduce God as the *All-Sufficient God*. God has several components to His character; He is Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Love, Perfection, Truth, etc. Here, He is presented as Omnipotent, or all-powerful; God with the ability to do anything, to accomplish anything. He is a God Whose strength and abilities transcend the laws of the universe, which universe He Himself created, which universe He holds together with the power of His Word, and which laws He predetermined. See the **Doctrine of God Almighty (HTML) (PDF)**.

God has always had a plan for Abram's life but it has not been until now that this plan kicks into high gear. Abram had to develop a lot of patience and trust to arrive at this point. He has screwed up a couple of times, but he just got up and moved on. His failures did not stop his growth. God gives Abram two imperatives; the first is the Hithpael imperative of *walk*, one of the most used verbs in the OT. The Hithpael is intensive reflexive and it means that Abram is to walk himself. The intensive means that his conduct of life has become even more important than his previous 99 years. *Before me* also means *in my presence*. This is an imperative for all believers; we should all conduct our lives as though God is right there in front of us because He is. We are watched by a multitude of angels and God is omniscient. Since God only spoke directly with Abram on a few occasions (of which we are aware) and since the full revelation of Scripture was not available to Abram, this is the first time when Abram is exposed to God's omniscience. What is occurring is what is known theologically as the *progressive revelation of God*; God did not reveal to Adam, Noah, or to Abram everything about Himself. In fact, we in the church age know more about God's character and actions than any Old Testament saint ever knew. Abram has known God as God, the Highest; as God the All-Sufficient and Omniscient< and here as God Who is omniscient.

The next imperative is that (in the KJV) Abram is to be blameless, which is the Qal imperative of the adjective *tāmîym* (תָּמִיִּם) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*] and it means *complete, entire, whole, beautiful, innocent, having integrity*. God has told Abram to be spiritually mature, to behave with integrity. Abram is an important witness in God's program and he is, before the face of God, to show personal and spiritual integrity. God has already blessed him and God has already made several unconditional promises to Abram. Still, God expects Abram to show integrity.

**"And I will give [or, establish] my covenant between Me and you and I will multiply you exceedingly."** [Gen. 17:2]

In various translations, the first verb of v. 2 is translated *establish, make, give*. The word does mean *to establish* or *to give*; there are seven columns of meaning in the Qal alone in BDB. God has promised Abram that He would make Abram a great nation, a father of many people, and is about to begin to fulfill those promises to Abram. The promise of most concern to Abram is the one of children; Abram has desired children for most of his 99 years on this earth and God has promised him that he would have children and that his progeny would be like the sand of the sea. Abram has trusted God perhaps 15 years ago on this point (in Gen. 15), but now he is sexually dead and the possibility of having children, other than Ishmael, seems quite unlikely.

**And Abram prostrated himself [lit., fell on his face] and God talked with him, saying, "Observe [give me your undivided attention] I [establish] my covenant with you and you will be a multitude of nations."** [Gen. 17:3–4]

God never had to tell Abram to fear Him or to give Him reverence. Abram was well-acquainted with God's power and majesty and that he, Abram, was nothing in comparison. He immediately does obeisance to God, being in His presence. One of the toughest words to translate and make work in the demonstrative particle *hinnêh* (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*] and it means to *pay attention, listen to this, observe, give me your undivided attention*. It is too often anachronistically translated as *behold!* or *lo!* God promises to Abram that He will give him a great number of descendants and that these descendants will become many nations.

**"No longer will you name be called Abram, but you name shall be Abraham, for I have made [or, established] you forasmuch as [you are] a father a multitude of nations [or, you are a father of a multitude; (you are a father) of nations]."** [Gen. 17:5]

I recall a cult of several years ago, which, for all I know, may still be in existence. This cult noticed that our Lord changed to name of Abram to Abraham and Saul of Tarsus to Paul, and made a play on words with the apostle Peter's name. For this reason, they all renamed themselves with some *holy* name. Get a clue, people. These people did not name themselves; God named them; God did not rename everyone in the Bible, only a small handful of believers were given a new name. These cults grab onto one or two small portions of Scripture; they do not grasp God's plan as a contiguous whole, and are entrenched in apostasy because of that. Almost every *Christian* cult begins with some undisciplined, charismatic person suffering from power and approbation lust, and they do a limited search of God's Word. Too often, they don't get very far out of the Old Testament, or they get caught in the sermon on the mount, or they dig in at Acts 2 and they do not realize that you cannot base your theology on a dozen or two dozen verses, and then bend the remaining Scriptures to fit this limited view. If you desire to know God's Word, there is one way and one way only to start; and that is under the tutelage of a pastor-teacher which God has provided. We are nowhere commanded to study God's Word for ourselves or to go off to some cave and meditate until the truth comes to us. God has delivered His Word to us and we are to apprehend it; but it is by means of a pastor-teacher who is firmly grounded in the Word, who teaches using ICE principles (isagogics, categories and exegesis). If the primary way of teaching in your church is your pastor takes a verse or a passage and continually launches out into another topic; where the Bible is used as a springboard; or if he teaches primarily by jumping from Scripture to Scripture, quoting *proof texts*, then you need to move on.

When I first believed in Jesus Christ, or was positive toward Him and wanted more, I began reading and listening to almost anything I could get my hands on. If they would send it to me for free (since I was quite poor) I would check it out. As a result, I listened to many persuasive speakers of many cults, read very persuasive literature of several cults, and realized that these could not all be simultaneously correct. I applied (without knowing it) a simple Biblical principal—by 2 or 3 witnesses (Deut. 17:6 19:15 Matt. 18:16 2Cor. 13:1) shall a fact be established. Three of the people who I listened to, R.B. Thieme, J. Vernon McGee and Duane Spencer, all were independent of one another, yet appeared to have basically the same viewpoint of salvation, God's Word and theological matters in general. Furthermore, two of them taught verse by verse, exegetically. In the cults, there were two or three who might agree, but they all belonged to the same cult. Furthermore, in studying these various cults, I noticed that each doctrine was justified by a proof text, and sometimes, but not often, two. I came to find out the most fundamental issues presented to the unbeliever and the basis for our so great salvation, Christ's death on the cross on our behalf, that we might obtain eternal salvation, eternal fellowship with God by simply believing in Him without any works of any kind, were not based upon one or two proof texts, but a multitude of texts. I once typed 5–6 pages of verses which dealt with those simple issues alone, with practically no commentary, just verse after verse which showed that we are to believe in Christ for salvation and that we attain this so great salvation apart from our works but based upon the merit of Christ's work on the cross. For this reason, all minor points of doctrine should be supportable by 2 or 3 verses and the very essence of our faith should be dependant upon a wealth of Scripture. My point here, of several points, is that I did not sit down and begin reading the Bible for myself. I understood its importance, to a limited degree, and I listened to those who were learned in the Word, and finally put myself under the direction of one pastor, R.B. Thieme, who, at the time, I found to be personally offensive.

A minor point: don't change your name. Don't be a fool. God did not call us into service to change our own names as an early step in our ministry. We are a witness to those around us and when they see things like that and think *cornball*. If you are not a good witness to a sharp unbeliever, then keep your mouth shut and do not tell anyone that you are a Christian. You want Scriptural references for this? Several times, people came to our Lord and asked to be healed, and our Lord sent them away telling them to not say a word to anyone (Mark 5:19, 20, 43). It is not God's plan for everyone of us to begin witnessing for Him two minutes after our new birth. Enthusiasm is wonderful but when we tell unbeliever things which are false and continually lead them into side issues, then we are not of any benefit to God. Get a clue from this verse: Abram is 99 and **now** God will bless him with a son and begin the most important phase of his life; Abram has been saved for decades. How old was Noah when he built the ark? How old was Moses when he lead the children of Israel out of Egypt? How long after Paul was knocked on his butt by Jesus Christ before he began to teach? No great spiritual hero began a productive spiritual life two minutes after salvation; or two days or two months after salvation. Keep your mouth shut and grow up a little first.



God changes Abram's name at this point. Abram means *exalted father* or *father of high and lofty places* or *father of nothing*. Most of you can see the progression of the meaning of *Abram*. When you are a father of high and lofty places, then you can be viewed as an exalted father or as a father of nothing. It was a play on words and Abram was a father of nothing. Ishmael did not count; he was unimportant when it came to Abram's true spiritual heritage. Abraham means *father of a multitude*. Abraham has one child that does not count and God renames him as a father of a multitude. Abraham when he hears his name called will be reminded daily of God's promise to him. Then God continues with His promises to Abraham:

Abraham is a father of a multitude and a father of nations. There were at least 5 nations which sprung from his loins alone when it came to Jewish nations; and there were several Arab nations which probably came from his loins.

**"I will cause you to be prolific exceedingly, exceedingly and I will make of you nations. Furthermore, kings from you shall come forth."** [Gen. 17:6]

The repetition of exceedingly means that Abraham will not just be prolific, but that the number of his descendants will be such that he cannot imagine how many there would be. How many people in the past can point down the road 500 years and point out a mass of people who are undoubtedly their descendants? From Abram, we can even today point out descendant after descendant; and not only can we identify his physical descendants, but we can also identify his spiritual descendants. There is no one in history other than Isaac and Jacob where their ancestors can be so readily recognized.

This is often translated is one sentence, which is acceptable, but one loses the idea that there are three separate thoughts being transmitted.

- Abraham will become able to father children again; he will become fruitful or prolific in the extreme.
- From Abraham will come many nations; at least 7.
- From Abraham will come many kings; the leaders of these nations.

**"Furthermore, I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land of your sojournings; [that is] all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession and I will be their God."** [Gen. 17:8]

God has promised Abraham again the land where he has resided as a transient. This land belongs to the Canaanites and Abraham has been wandering throughout this land in a tent, with a large company of men and women and children. He does not own any of this land; it has been taken by the Canaanites who have inhabited this land since Gen. 11. They lived in the land as squatters, essentially, except that there was no one to take the land from, other than a few other previous squatters. We did see some struggle for this real estate back in Gen. 14, indicating that at that time it was probably a very prime piece of real estate, certainly not as covered with deserts then as it is today. However, it is still an object which nations battle over even today. God has given that piece of real estate to the Jews; to Abram's descendants.

Then we have that amazing statement: "I will be their God." No other nation or group of people has ever had such a statement made of them and perhaps this has caused some of the anti-Semitism. People cannot stand exclusivity. So many people who I have witnessed to do not like that God has established but one way to be saved; that each different religion isn't just basically right for the culture from which it originated. We want to believe that if each man worships God in his own way, that God will be just too thrilled with this man's sincerity and earnestness not to take them into heaven. So wouldn't it be natural for some people, the old sin nature being what it is, to despise the fact that God has come to a particular people to be their God?

Throughout the greater portion of the Bible, from Gen. 12 on through the entirety of the Old Testament on through to the middle of the gospels and then picking back up in Rev. 4, we have God dealing primarily with and through the nation Israel. He chose them from the foundation of the world and for much of human history had an exclusive relationship with the nation Israel. Even the church for many centuries tried to denigrate this relationship with covenant theology. The basic philosophy was that the church began in Abraham's tent and that true Israel is essentially equivalent to the church. How can anyone read past Genesis in the Old Testament and come up with

this sort of conclusion? True Israel and the **true** church (those who have believed in Jesus Christ) are saved and have that in common and could be called spiritual brothers. However, we are not equivalent and the programs which God has set up on our behalf are not equivalent. Here are where cults become confused: they cannot differentiate between the Old and New Testaments; they cannot see a clear difference between the church and Israel. These are two separate entities with different expectations and slightly different relationships. Because someone has not had correct teaching with regard to the church and Israel, the influential leader of a cult originally goes off on the deep end, failing to make this distinction on his (or her) own. All it takes is some initial disorientation, and then coming across the verse "**There still remains a Sabbath**" and we have instance misapplication and confusion which is passed down to the dupes of the charismatic leader.

See the chart **Israel and the church**. It is with something as this chart that one becomes grounded and can make the fine distinctions which we have to make in Scripture (Heb. 4:12). As a young Christian, without the careful guidance of Bob Thieme and the excellent *Scofield Reference Bible*, I would have never made the correct distinctions no matter how many years that I studied. God has made it possible for us to differentiate, but we must get with His program, which, in the church age, is under the careful teaching of a well-trained pastor who uses ICE principles (isagogs, categories and exegesis).

What is humorous (in a tragic way) is that we continually find cults and various *Christian* religions which try to get us to live in a manner similar to Israel, but rarely do they emphasize circumcision or militarily taking over the land of Palestine or the execution of disobedient teenagers (although the last point definitely has merit, particularly in a degenerate society such as the one we find ourselves in).

A Comparison and Contrast Between Israel and the Church	
Israel	The Church
Israel is a nation chosen by God and sustained by covenant promises (Deut. 7:6-9). Not all individuals in this chosen nation are saved (Rom. 9:6; 11:28).	The Church is a called out assembly of believers who have been baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Every member of the body of Christ is saved, though there are multitudes of professing Christians who may not be saved (2 Tim. 2:19).
Israel traces its origin to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Jacob being the father of the twelve tribes).	The Church traces its origin to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when believers were first placed into the body of Christ.
In God's program for Israel, His witnesses comprised a nation (Isaiah 43:10).	In God's program for the Church, His witnesses are among all nations (Acts 1:8).
God's program for Israel <b>centered</b> in Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37) and will again center in Jerusalem during the Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-20) and during the Millennium (Isa. 2:1-5).	God's program for His Church <b>began</b> in Jerusalem and extended to the uttermost parts of the earth (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The Church is identified with the risen Christ, not with any earthly city.
The hope and expectancy of Israel was earthly, centering in the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah foretold by the prophets (Jer. 23:5-8; Isa. 2:1-5; 11:1-16).	The hope and expectancy of the Church is heavenly, centering in the glorious appearing of Christ to take His people to heaven (John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
God's purpose and program for Israel was revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.	God's purpose and program for the Church was not revealed in the Old Testament, but was revealed by the New Testament apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:5).

A Comparison and Contrast Between Israel and the Church	
Israel	The Church
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 70 weeks or 490 years) involved animal sacrifices. These years will include the tribulation. Israel's millennial history will involve the same (Ezek. 43:27).	The Church's history does not involve animal sacrifices. Messiah's sacrifice is commemorated by means of the Lord's Table.
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 490 years including also the Tribulation) involves a temple in Jerusalem. The same will be true in the Millennium (Ezek. chapters 40-48).	During most of the Church age there is no Jewish temple in Jerusalem. In this age God manifests His glory in His believers, both individually and collectively, designating them as His temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:21-22). This is accomplished by the indwelling ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 490 years) involves a priesthood limited to the sons of Aaron, and excluding most Israelites. The same applies to the Millennium when Zadokian priests (also sons of Aaron) will serve in the temple (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15).	During the Church age every true believer is a priest and able to offer spiritual sacrifices to the Lord (Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). Whereas Israel had a priesthood, the Church <i>is</i> a priesthood.
Israel's history which is in view in Daniel 9:24 (the 490 years) will terminate with the coming of the Messiah to the earth to establish His Kingdom reign.	The Church's history will end at the Rapture of the Church when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rom. 11:25).
During Israel's history (the 490 years of Daniel 9:24 which also includes the Tribulation) the ethnic makeup of the world is bipartite: Jews and Gentiles. This division of all people into Jews and Gentiles will also apply to those in the Millennial Kingdom in natural bodies.	During the Church age from Pentecost to the Rapture the ethnic makeup of the world is tripartite: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32), the Church being composed of saved Jews and Gentiles united together in one Body (Eph. 2:15; 3:6),
During Israel's history, from Sinai to the Millennial Kingdom (excluding the Church age), Israel's role in the world will be characterized by PRIORITY [that is, they will have a leading role as God's chosen people]"see Deut. 4:6-8; Isa. 43:10; Matt. 10:5-6; Zech. 8:23.	During the Church age, Israel's role in the world will be characterized by EQUALITY" Jew and Gentiles united together in one body to bear testimony to a risen Christ (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28).
Male Jews were circumcised as a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. Believing Jews were circumcised in the heart (Jer. 4:4).	Believers of this age enjoy an internal circumcision not made with hands (Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3). Physical circumcision is not required.
Israel was under the law of Moses as a rule of life.	The Church is under the "new creature"• rule (Gal. 6:15-16).
Unbelieving Jews were physical children of Abraham and spiritual children of the devil (John 8:37-44).	Every believer in Christ (every true member of the Church, whether Jew or Gentile) is a child of Abraham and a child of God (Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:26-29). This statement does <b>not</b> mean that Church age believers are Israelites.
Israel was to observe the Sabbath Day (Exodus 20:8). Sabbath observance will also take place in the Tribulation (Matt. 24:20) and in the Millennium (Ezek. 46:1,3).	The Church is to be diligent and make every effort to enter into God's rest (Heb. 4:9-11). This is a daily duty.

A Comparison and Contrast Between Israel and the Church	
Israel	The Church
Membership into the Jewish nation was by birth or by becoming a proselyte (a convert to Judaism).	Membership into the Church is by the new birth accomplished by the baptizing ministry of God (1 Cor. 12:13).
Believing Jews prior to Pentecost, believing Jews during the tribulation, and believing Jews during the Kingdom reign of Christ are not members of the body of Christ.	Believing Jews and Gentiles from Pentecost to the Rapture are members of the body of Christ.
Israel's place of worship centered in Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10; John 4:20) and this will also be true in the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27) and in the Millennium (Isa. 2:1-5).	The Church's place of worship is "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name"• (Matt. 18:20; John 4:21-24). Christ is in the midst of His Churches (Rev. 1:13, 20).
Israel is likened to the wife of Jehovah, often an unfaithful wife (Hosea).	The Church is the beloved Bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-8) to be one day presented blameless and spotless (Eph. 5:27).
I have not gone through to check this entire chart yet; but, for the most part, it appears to be accurate. However, there are serious problems with the website that this came from. From: <a href="http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/dispn/israelch.htm">http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/dispn/israelch.htm</a>	

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

**And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you will keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant which you will keep between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male of those among you shall be circumcised. Furthermore, you will be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins and it will be a sign of a covenant between me and you." [Gen. 17:9–11]**

This is the first mention of circumcision in the Bible. It is performed on the male's phallus and is a reminder to every Israelite every time that they urinate that they belong to God as a peculiar people, that they are tied to a covenant which God has established between Himself and the Jew. **See the Doctrine of Circumcision (HTML) (PDF).**

**"He that is eight days old shall be circumcised of every male among you throughout your generations whether born in house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your offspring, he absolutely must be circumcised [lit., circumcised, circumcised] he that is born in your house and he that is bought with your money. So shall my covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." [Gen. 17:12—13]**

God becomes very specific with Abraham as to when circumcision will be done and that it is done to all those born Jews and all of those who are bought as slaves and brought into the house as *family*. In v. 13 we have the doubling of the word *circumcised* first in the Niphal infinitive absolute (which is a verbal noun in the passive sense; *he that is being circumcised*) and then in the Niphal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular (again, the passive sense, but the subject is the singular masculine, referring to a young male or a slave). The most common meaning of the doubling of a verb is strong emphasis. God promised Abraham that He would revive his dead phallus and that Abraham would have a son by Sarai, and every time that Abraham was to urinate, he would be reminded of that promise that God made to him. Every Jew will see his own phallus as a memorial to this promise. This is quite

simply why the rite of circumcision is not a part of the Christian life—it pertains quite simply and quite specifically to Israel and the physical descendants of Abraham and to God's specific promise to Abraham.

In v. 13, the word *flesh* is used to separate man from all other things, created and divine. This covenant has nothing to do with the animal kingdom, with angels or with any other creature, if there are any. It is strictly a covenant with man. Furthermore, the term emphasizes man's physical body here (although it can emphasize his weakness and the old sin nature).

**"Furthermore, any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people [because] he has broken [or, caused the breaking of] my covenant."**  
[Gen. 17:14]

The repetition of the word circumcision in v. 13 and the stern warning in this verse indicates that circumcision is not an option or not a suggestion, but a mandate to the Jewish race as important as any of the commandments and ordinances; in fact, more so, since this is delivered prior to the commandments and ordinances. The Jew had to take what God offered him in the covenant; a present exchanges hands if the person receiving the gift actually takes it. The person who is not circumcised is breaking the covenant between himself and God and will therefore be cut off from the covenant.

**And God said to Abraham, "Sarai, your wife, you will not call her name Sarai but Sarah will be her name."** [Gen. 17:15]

According to R. B. Thieme, Jr., Sarai means *contentious* or *bitch*; however, I have been unable to confirm that. Sarah means *princess*. This is quite the change in the meaning of her name. God very occasionally renames a person—Abraham, Sarah and Paul being the chief examples of persons who God renamed. This is not a call to go out and change your name if you have just become a Christian; Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 90; they have both been saved for decades.

**I will bless her and, moreover, I will give by means of her to you a son. I will bless her and she will be nations; kings of peoples will come from her."** [Gen. 17:16]

This is the first time that it is recorded in Scripture that God would bless Abraham through Sarah. Prior to this it was implied in Scripture that she would be the mother of the promise, but it was never stated. This does not mean that God did not tell this specifically to Abraham before; however, I prefer to think that God gave Abraham enough information to realize that the son of the promise would come through Sarah, yet allowed Abraham to deduce it (which he did not).

**Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "To one a hundred years old shall a child be born? And shall even Sarah, who is 90 years old give birth?"** [Gen. 17:17]

Up until this time, when in the presence of God, Abraham prostrated himself out of obedience and respect; however, he is expressing a certain amount of doubt at this stage in the game. He believed God and this was credited to him as righteousness, but he seems somewhat skeptical at this point. The literal rendering of a portion of this verse is "...to a son of 100 years shall a child be born and Sarah, a daughter of 90 years, shall bear a child?" Abraham thinks that he is being funny by calling himself a son of 100 years and Sarah a daughter of 90 years; they are both young enough to be called son and daughter.

There is another interpretation to Abraham's action. Bullinger believes that Abraham fell on the ground laughing for joy. I believe that Abraham should have known that the promises to him would be fulfilled through Sarah, but that he did not put two and two together. I believe that Abraham all this time has come to assume that the promises to him would be fulfilled in Ishmael. There is nothing to indicate that Abraham is having any more children. And there might be a mix of incredulousness and skepticism in Abraham's questions. What he has heard from God is quite powerful and amazing.

These two sentences are set in the form of questions, as the Hebrew dictates; however, what we have here is erotesis [pronounced *er-ō-TEE-sis*] is a figure of speech wherein someone asks an animated question but it is not with the intention of obtaining information. Such a question could indicate wonder and admiration or it could indicate that Abraham is doubtful.

**Then Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live in your sight." [Gen. 17:18]**

It is because of v. 18 that I believe that Abraham's general reaction was one of skepticism. He seems to think that God would change His plans midstream and decide to go with Ishmael. You see, Abraham has only one true son at this time and it is Ishmael; Abraham is quite indulgent and he loves this son. Sarah does not share his enthusiasm or his love because Ishmael is not her son and she represents a moment of infidelity on Abraham's part (it does not matter that it was her idea; you must keep in mind that Sarah is a normal female). So Abraham is hoping against hope that Ishmael might be the son of God's promise. However, that was never God's plan.

**Then God said to Abraham, "Negative; Sarah, your wife, shall bear you a son and you will call his name Isaac and I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him." [Gen. 17:19]**

God specifically tells Abraham again that this child will be born through Sarah. Furthermore, God names Abraham's son-to-be with the name Isaac. *Isaac*, in the Hebrew, is Yis<sup>o</sup>châq (יִשְׁחָק) [pronounced *yih<sup>s</sup>-KHAWK*] and it means *laughter*. In the Hebrew, *laugh* in the Qal imperfect, has the exact same consonants, with different vowel points. Since Abraham's first impulse is to laugh when God tells him that Isaac will be born, then God calls his son *laughter*.

**"As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Observe [that] I will bless him and make him fruitful and I will cause to multiply him exceedingly exceedingly; he will be the father of twelve princes and I will make him a great nation." [Gen. 17:20]**

God is quite specific here and in the other prophecies about Ishmael. He will cause the seed of Abraham to multiply to a huge number of descendants through Ishmael; however, here, as in the other two passages which deal with Ishmael, there will be but one nation which will come from him. God further narrows this down to being the land facing the Jews (which is sometimes translated, *east of the Jews*) (Gen. 16:12). Abraham is said to be the father of a great nation (singular in Gen. 12:2) in reference to Israel in general, where the various Jewish client nations to God are seen as a contiguous whole. God also promises that Abraham will be the father of a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:4) and that Sarah would be a mother of nations (Gen. 17:16), which is a reference to the various Jewish client nations taken separately and to Arabia (Abraham will also have other children besides Ishmael and Isaac). We have two basic kinds of prophecies in the Bible; the near and the far prophecies and a portion of this one will be fulfilled in Abraham's day. Ishmael will have 12 sons. All 12 will become great leaders in their area, which will become one country.

**"But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." [Gen. 17:21]**

God is making this as clear as possible He has told Abraham 3 times that this son would be born through Sarah (Gen. 17:16, 19, 21) and has told Abraham twice that this son would be the one with whom God kept His covenant (Gen. 17:19, 21). God believes in teaching by repetition. At the time of this prophecy, Sarah had not conceived and it had been very likely a long time since they had sexual relations. Our Lord will return again and repeat these things to Abraham so that Sarah will overhear.

**Then when He had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. [Gen. 17:22]**

Jesus Christ returned to the third heaven. The word which is translated *went up* is 'âlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*] and it means *to ascend* although it has a variety of meanings depending upon the context and the action

involved. Abraham has enough spiritual information to get him through the next couple weeks. He has to see to the circumcision of those males who are with him of the circumcision of himself.

**The Abraham took Ishmael, his son and all born in his house or all those bought with his money—every male among the inhabitants [lit., men] of Abraham's house and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day as God had said to him. Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [Gen. 17:23–24]**

The Hebrew does the same thing that the English did for a long time; when referring to men and women, the term men was often used. *Adam* can refer to the first male, to man and to mankind. Here it is a reference to mankind. *Male* is the word *zâkâr* (זָכָר) [pronounced *zaw-KAWR*] and this is a word which distinguishes men from women in the human and animal realm and is used quite often when dealing with circumcision. The Qal imperfect of *circumcise* means that Abraham very likely did all the circumcising (he did not farm out this duty as a Hiphil stem would indicate. However, *was circumcised* is in the Niphal stem, which is passive; that is, Abraham did not circumcise himself. As a male, I can testify that this process for grown men took a great deal of faith and trust in God.

Wikipedia **says** that the earliest records of circumcision go back to 23<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., where we have both written and artistic evidence of circumcision occurring in Egypt.

**And Ishmael, his son, was 13 years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the very same day, Abraham was circumcised and Ishmael, his son; and all the men of his household who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him. [Gen. 17:25–27]**

It seems as though vv. 25–27 do not seem to add much additional information, other than the fact that Ishmael was circumcised. This leads us to two questions: was Ishmael saved and why the extra couple verses? It is possible that this experience elicited such a reaction from Abraham that he just couldn't stop writing about it, even though he was repeating himself. Not much of an explanation, I realize.

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 18** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 18

### Genesis 18:1–33

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

**Introduction:** Chapter 18 contains the promise of the birth of Isaac to Sarah and it again has Abraham attempting to bail out his nephew, Lot. Abraham knows how to pray and prays to God concerning Sodom and Gomorrah in order to preserve Lot and his family.

After 13 quiet years, God appears to Abraham soon thereafter.

**Then Yahweh appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day.** [Gen. 18:1]

*Appeared* is an interesting construction; this is the Niphal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular of *râ'âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see*. However, our Lord was not the one who *was seeing* but the one who *was seen*. This is why the passive voice is used here; effectively, this changes the meaning of the word from *to see* to *to appear*.

Mamre was one of the men who had helped Abraham back in Gen. 14 to route the kings. It is also the area that Abraham first settled in prior to this battle with the 4 kings. Gen. 13:18 tells us that this is in or near Hebron (both prepositions have the same root Hebrew word). My guess would be that Mamre was given the name by Mamre, who settled there before Abraham; or, Abraham picked up Mamre in Mamre and gave him that nickname.

**So he looked up [lit., lifted up his eyes] and observed that there [lit., looked and behold] stood three men in front of him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of the tent and bowed himself to the earth. and said, "My Lords, please, if I have found grace in your sight, do not pass by your servant."** [Gen. 18:2–3]

V. 1 tells us that this is the Lord, although it is not clear whether Abraham knows that or not. This is likely Jesus and two angels coming to Abraham at this momentous time. We can be fairly certain that one of them at least is Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the One who is revealed. Vv. 19 and 13 indicate this.

The reason the narrative begins with Abraham seeing three men is because Abraham did not realize who this was at first. What he was doing was being polite. *Lord* here is the masculine plural with a 1st person singular suffix of the Hebrew word *'ădônâi* (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*] is a term of respect and it can refer to God or to a person. *My Lords* is a good translation as long as it is not confused and thought to be a divine reference. *Sirs* would be another good translation here. Abraham is ingratiating himself to these strangers and is assuming the best of them. Abraham is merely providing them with some southern hospitality.

**"Please allow a little water to be brought and you may wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree while I bring back a morsel of bread and you may refresh yourselves [lit., sustain your heart]. After that you may go on, since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Thus do as you have said."** [Gen. 18:4–5]



Abraham has been a stranger in a strange land and has traveled the length and breadth of the land of Canaan as God had told him to do. He recognized the importance of hospitality and kindness. *To be brought* is the Hophal, which is the passive causative stem; the water is being brought (passive) and Abraham will not bring it out himself but have his wife or servants bring it out. He will personally bring out some food to them (*bring back*—literally, *fetch*—is in the Qal imperfect. The Qal is the simple verb form and the imperfect tense means that this will be a process. The word *servant* is the proper contrast to the word *lord*.

**Then Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly make ready three measures [of] fine meal; knead it and make cakes. Then Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf [lit., a son of a herd] tender and good and gave to a servant [lit., a young man] who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared and set [this] before them and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. [Gen. 18:6–8]**

Times have changed considerably. Abraham cannot very well send out for pizza, pop some leftovers into a microwave, take them to the nearest restaurant, etc. This hospitality thing takes a great deal of time. The water has not been mentioned; likely, at the very beginning, Abraham's servants automatically saw to their guests or Abraham directed them to do so. Abraham is doing this all as quickly as possible (*hastened* is used three times in vv. 6 & 7 alone—one time, it is translated *quickly make ready*). We are seeing a process which must have taken 2–3 hours. This is quite a feast, unlike any that three travelers would have had over the past few months.

**They said to him, "Where is Sarah, your wife? [lit., As to Sarah your wife...?]" And he said, "She [is] there [lit., behold] in the tent." [Gen. 18:9]**

We do not know whether or not Abraham has mentioned Sarah, but it is likely that the men may have seen her moving about preparing their meal; or they may have heard Abraham speaking to her. In any case, God knows who Sarah is. We already know how protective Abraham is of his wife (and, particularly of his own life when it might be threatened due to the attractiveness of his wife) so it is more likely that Abraham kept her out of sight. Therefore, when he spoke of *fetching* the bread in the Qal rather than in a causative stem, it is because he personally brought the bread out to them. Sarah prepared it, but remained in the tent, out of sight and likely Abraham was never even heard speaking to her. *They said* is in the Qal imperfect, meaning that each of the three men asked Abraham where his wife was until he finally answered.

**He said, "I will definitely return to you in the spring [lit., at the time of reviving] and [lit., behold] a son your wife Sarah will have." And Sarah was listening at the door of the tent behind him. [Gen. 18:10]**

Omniscience is implied in v. 9 where they ask about Sarah; and it is further implied here where, having not even seen Abraham's wife, God says that she will be with child in 9 months. Sarah was obviously not allowed to be out visiting with Abraham and the men and this is likely due to either the culture. However, since three strangers traveling through is an unusual occurrence and since their cable is probably on the fritz that night, Sarah is curious as to the topics of conversation. Particularly when she has heard her name used several times.

**Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advance in age [lit., in the days]. It had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. [Gen. 18:11]**

At this point, Bible is moving into unsafe waters. When wondering what age constitutes being old, we have the Biblical perspective here: Abraham is 99 and Sarah is 90, and God the Holy Spirit designates that they are old. There is the possible implication that Sarah is old when she passes the age of being able to conceive, but I would hesitate to be dogmatic about that, due to personal experience and because it is not stated here in that way. I would hesitate to call any woman old who was not 90.

**So Sarah laughed in herself, saying [thinking], "After I have grown old, shall I have (sexual) pleasure with [lit., and] my lord [who] is old?" [Gen. 18:12]**

The first preposition is qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced *KEH-re<sup>b</sup>v*] and it has to do with the nearest part or the center. This may be translated that Sarah laughed *in, within, or to* herself. *Shall I have pleasure* is the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which means *come to pass, to be, to become*. Sexual pleasure is a hapax legomenon (plural: hapax legomena) in the Old Testament. It is the word 'ed<sup>e</sup>nâh (עֵדֶנָה) [pronounced *éhd-NAW*]. This word is related to *Eden*, which was "Garden of Delights." This is the subject. The verb is in the Qal perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix. The subject is actually *sexual pleasure* and that portion of Scripture is actually *Shall sexual pleasure come to pass for me*. It sounds as though Sarah is a tiny bit skeptical concerning what Jesus Christ had to say (although neither she nor Abraham realized that it was the Lord yet).

Sarah is not asking a question, but stating a strong doubt in the form of a question, which does not require an answer from anyone, including herself (erotesis).

**Then Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Indeed, shall I bear a child now that I am old?'"** [Gen. 18:13]

When people think, a great many things go through their minds. Sarah is thinking both about conceiving and having a child and she is thinking about the sexual pleasure involved in which must first take place. God the Son does give her a certain amount of privacy and just mentions her thoughts concerning bearing a child. God the Holy Spirit in Scripture reveals to us that was not the only thing which ran through her head. Abraham is stunned; he doesn't even know that Sarah is listening; he doesn't know what Jesus Christ is talking about. Sarah is even more shocked—she's hidden from view, absolutely quiet, intently listening to a conversation which partially involves her; and she hasn't said a word; but her thoughts are as perspicuous to the omniscience of God as are her actions. We cannot hide what we are thinking from God. Furthermore, this verse makes it clear to us who one of the three people are who have come to visit Abraham (as does v. 1).

**"Is anything too difficult [or, formidable] for Yahweh? [Hell, no!] At a specific [or, predetermined] time, I will return to you in the spring and Sarah shall have a son."** [Gen. 18:14]

Pâlâ' (פֶּלֶא) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] is in the interrogative Niphal (passive stem) and it means *is anything too difficult* and is used throughout the Old Testament primarily for acts of God. When it is not used interrogatively, then it is often translated *wondrous, marvelous, exceptional, remarkable, phenomenal, astonishing or extraordinary acts*. *Erotesis* is asking a question without waiting for an answer. This means that it is a rhetorical question; the speaker is asking an animated question for which he does not demand, nor does he wait for an answer. He is making a declaration of importance and the answer is inherent in the question. This is a particular case of an *affirmative negation*, for which one could supply, in brackets, the words *hell no!*

Môw'éd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced *moh-GADE*] is a Hebrew word which means *a set time, an appointed time, a time determined beforehand, or, by extension, an assembly convened for a specific purpose, the place where this meeting is convened*. It is used well over 100 times in the Old Testament and a good modern translation would be *a pre-determined time, a specific time*. Often, this is a yearly event or this means a year from that day, but that is not always the case. This word is used most often when referring to feast days and solemn feast days, although it is occasionally translated *seasons*.

God has answered Sarah's questions which she has only thought. Abraham is baffled and Sarah is listening intently, realizing that this is Yahweh who is speaking. Sarah is right at the door to the tent, right near the tree where the three men are sitting and Abraham is standing, and she steps outside, perhaps making it look as though she just happened to be passing by the door and caught the tail end of this conversation.

**But Sarah denied that she had laughed, saying, "I did not laugh" (for she was afraid). He said, "On the contrary, you did laugh."** [Gen. 18:15]

Sarah is beginning to realize who the visitors are, but this is all happening rather quickly, so she does not comprehend this fully. She is at once afraid, realizing that someone can hear her thoughts, and she also denies what she did (perhaps, thinking, that she did not laugh *out loud*). Our Lord responds with a negative conjunction,

often translated *no, but*. The NRSV translates this *Oh, yes, you did laugh* and the NEB renders this *yes, you did laugh*. *On the contrary* is closer to the actual Hebrew words, yet is not as stilted as *no, but*. The direct conversation indicates that Sarah is now outside, talking to the strangers, although by pre-agreement, this was not what she was supposed to do (otherwise, she would have been out there in the first place).

Because of the separation between chapters 15 and 16, we miss our Lord's sense of humor, which is evident in both the Old and New Testaments. In Gen. 15:19, Abraham and Sarah's future son was to be named Isaac. Isaac means *laughter* and Sarah was laughing within herself. Yahweh has essentially said, Sarah is laughing inside; several months from now, Sarah will still have laughter inside her. This laughter is named Isaac. Because Sarah laughed within herself, she would have nine months of having laughter inside.

**Then the men set out from there and they looked toward Sodom and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. [Gen. 18:16]**

It has become clear to Abraham and to Sarah that one of these men is the Lord. Vv. 13 and 14 indicate when this fact began to dawn upon Abraham and Sarah.

What is about to follow is a primer on intercessory prayer. Abraham has recently (13 or so years ago) for all intents and purposes, rescued the five cities, which included Sodom. His nephew Lot, and his family, was living in Sodom. God had a plan for Sodom and that was destruction. When a society reaches a certain peak of degeneracy (which we are quite a degenerate nation today, but nothing like Sodom), God must destroy it. Such degeneracy is like a cancer and will destroy the entire world with its degeneracy unless it is destroyed. This passage will also teach the importance of a *pivot*, as Thieme liked to call it. When a nation has individuals in it who are believers, these believers act as a preservative and a stabilizer to that society. When they are mature believers, that increases their function in these regards.

In these five cities, there are perhaps anywhere from 10,000 to a half a million people (I am making an educated guess). Lot has a wife, at least two daughters which are virgins, at least two sons-in-law, at least two sons and probably a few servants. Abraham knows that out of the persons in Lot's household at least ten of these are all believers. This should give one an understanding for how small a pivot needs to be in order to preserve a nation (in this case, a city). Even if 1/10 of 1% of a population are believers, God will often preserve that nation, given intercessory prayer on the part of mature believers.

**Then Yahweh said, "Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am about to do seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth will be blessed themselves by [or, in] him. For [you see], I have known him that he may instruct [lit., command] his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice so that Yahweh may bring about to Abraham what He has promised him." [Gen. 18:17–19]**

God does not talk to Himself. He is speaking to the other members of the trinity or to the angels, and He is speaking aloud because the angels cannot read God's mind. God must narrate some of the events of history so that it is clear to the angels just exactly what is occurring and what God's involvement is in the world. Much of the reason for human history is the solving of the angelic conflict; the resolving of the issues raised at the appeal trial of Satan. Since God is love and God is perfect justice, it is not a contradiction, but in some sort of way, it would be difficult for Him to condemn Satan and the fallen angels. It is even more difficult for the elect angels to understand; human history explains that, so much of what is seen by the angels is explained to them point by point. When God asks if He should conceal what He is about to do from Abraham, this is again an example of an affirmative negation in erotesis. He is not eliciting information but stating a question which demands a strong negative answer.

Abraham is a foreshadowing of Christ in many ways under many circumstances. Many translations state that *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him*. *Blessed* is in the Niphal (passive) stem and *in him* sets up a parallel to Jesus Christ. One of the most important phrases of the New Testament is the believer's position *in*

*Christ*. Throughout much of the Old Testament we have the phrase *in Abraham*, which is an intentional parallelism by God the Father to foreshadow positional truth.

*I have known him* is the foreknowledge of God. God, knowing the future, and having made promises to Abraham, and knowing the impact on history which Abraham will have due to his advanced state of spiritual maturity, will use Abraham to illustrate an important point which reveals God's mercy and longsuffering. All the nations of the earth will be blessed in the nation which shall come from Abraham, a nation born out of a salvation choice made by Abraham.

Abraham, without the Law, has done the things which are found in the law, and he thereby became a law unto himself (Rom. 2:4 Gal. 3:18). What Abraham is about to do will illustrate righteousness to the angels.

**The Yahweh said [to Abraham], "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their depravity [lit., sin] is very grave [lit., heavy]." [Gen. 18:20]**

Z<sup>e</sup>âqâh (רַעְרָה) [pronounced z<sup>e</sup>h-âgaw-KAW] is a shriek or a cry; it can be a cry of distress and it can be a outcry against a people (which is what it is here). Their degeneracy is almost beyond conception and the lack of law and order make it utterly impossible for the gospel to be presented. God must eliminate this group of people because of their depravity and immorality. It had become so gross that it cried out to God.

*Sin* is in the singular, gathering the totality of their degeneracy into an effective whole. It could have been translated *their depravity is very grave*. This shows that we have an English equivalent and that the word *sin* in the singular can stand for not just the old *sin* nature but for the totality of their immorality.

*Is grave* is one word, a verb, the Qal perfect of kâbêd (כָּבַד) [pronounced kaw<sup>b</sup>-VADE] and it means *to be heavy, burdensome, weighty*. Their degeneracy has reached a point to where it has weighed them down; it has become a burden to society as a whole.

**"I will go down to see whether according to the [or, their] outcry which has come to me they have done altogether and if not, I will know [or, I will therefore go down (to Sodom) to observe whether or not they completely correspond with this outcry which has come to me with the purpose that I may know]." [Gen. 18:21]**

The actual translation of this verse is quite cumbersome, but what it says is relatively easy to understand. The outcry is the shrieking of their degeneracy which has ascended all the way to heaven. In this theophany, Jesus Christ will go to Sodom and Gomorrah and it will be shown to the angels the extent of the degeneracy of the men of Sodom. God will observe as a Theophany whether the outcry actually corresponds fully with the actions of the Sodomites. *The Emphasized Bible* translates the last phrase as *And if not, I must know!* Further, this is an anthropopathism—the ascribing to God human thoughts or emotions which He does not possess so that we may have a better understanding of God's actions and motivations. God is omniscient; He does not need to find out how degenerate Sodom and Gomorrah are; He knew that in eternity past.

**So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom. Yahweh still stood before Abraham. Then Abraham drew near and said, "Indeed? Will you destroy the righteous with the wicked?" [Gen. 18:22–23]**

In a misguided spirit of reverence, the original text in v. 21 was altered slightly to read *But Abraham stood yet before the Lord*. This is one of the 18 emendations of the Sopherim. In the margins of standard Hebrew Codices we have writing (called the Massorah) which pertains to the passage at hand. This is not a running commentary, but contains information helpful in understanding the text or the variant readings. In this situation, there were roughly 18 passages which were changed before the time of Christ because they somehow seemed irreverent. It seemed better to the copyist if he wrote that Abraham stood before Yahweh, rather than the other way around. This is why my translation might be different from yours.

God knew about Lot and his family in Sodom and so did Abraham. God was waiting for Abraham to intercede on behalf of Lot. Abraham does not reveal his entire hand at first; even though God knows from eternity past how Abraham's argument will proceed. But Abraham does understand a certain amount about the salt principle and that God preserves nations and cities because the some of the inhabitants being believers.

**"Suppose there are 50 righteous within the city; what then? Will You destroy [the city] and not spare the place on behalf of the 50 righteous people who are in it?" [Gen. 18:24]**

This is a marvelous passage. Abraham is not exactly eliciting information; he is asking God a rhetorical question. Abraham is pointing out to God, God's Own character and supports the negative answer which he expects with the following verse.

**"Far be it from You to do such a thing [lit., according to this word]; to slay the righteous with the wicked so that the righteous fair as the wicked. Far be that from You. Shall the Judge of all the earth not do [what is] right?" [Gen. 18:25]**

When God is called the judge of the earth, this does not mean that He judges the earth per se, but He judges the inhabitants of the earth. This figure of speech is called a metonymy [pronounced *me-TON-y-my*] where the word used actually stands for another. Furthermore, it is Jesus Christ Who is speaking here, for God committed all judgment to him. **"For not even the Father judges any one, but He has given all judgement to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father Who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live; for just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man."** (John 5:22–27).

In our prayers, it is alright (if not commendable) to point out why they should be answered or why God should listen to us; particularly if it involves invoking what we know to be true of God's character. Even under limited revelation, Abraham knew that God's treatment of the righteous is not the same as His treatment of the wicked; and if God is destroying an area because of the gross immorality, this is not the fault of the believers who inhabit this area.

**And Yahweh said, "If I find in Sodom 50 righteous in the city, I will spare the entire area for their sake." [Gen. 18:26]**

The importance of Abraham's entreaty cannot be overestimated. It will seem like a genealogy, but there are several important truths to be ascertained from Abraham's prayer:

- The salt principle; enough believers residing in an area will deliver that area from God's wrath.
- We should approach God on behalf of others in our prayers.
- We should approach God on the basis of His character.
- We should approach God on the basis of doctrine in our souls.
- It takes a very small percentage of believers to insure the safety of their general geographical area.
- God will listen to us and God will be patient with us.
- Whereas we, as believers, often suffer with the unrighteous, God is still our protection.
- Throughout this prayer, notice, particularly in v. 27, that Abraham is grace oriented. He recognizes that he is nothing in God's sight yet he recognizes that God will hear him.

**Abraham answered and said, "Hear me please [lit., behold please]: I have taken upon my self to speak to Yahweh; I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose the 50 righteous are lacking 5; will You destroy for a lack of 5 the entire city?" And He said, "I will not destroy if I find there 45." [Gen. 18:27–28]**

There are several figures of speech found in v. 27. I will mention two of them. One is lost to us in the English: *dust and ashes*. The Hebrew words are עָפָר [pronounced *aphar*] and וְאֵפֶר [pronounced *v'-epher*]. This is a

paronomasia, where similar sounding words are synonymous (our situation here), antithetical or of varied significance. Furthermore, these words are commonly combined, so they form what is called a syntheton [pronounced *SYN-the-ton*], like rich and poor, meat the drink, young and old.

As Abraham begins his line of reasoning, notice that he recognizes that he is insignificant before God. He calls himself dust and ashes; Abraham is oriented to God's grace. Most believers never achieve even this most basic step in spiritual growth. They are always doing great things for God, giving God vast sums of money, allowing others to hear their testimony, giving others the opportunity to hear their wonderful singing voices. They are good people and because of that they expect God's blessing. And they have no concept of who and what they are and Who and What God is.

**And he continued to speak to Him and said, "Suppose there are 40 found there." He answered, "I will not do it [destroy the city] on behalf of the 40." Then he said, "Oh please let not the Lord be angry and I will speak: Suppose there are found 30?"** [Gen. 18:29–30]

Abraham continues along this same line. He has predetermined how many believers that there should be in Lot's family. He has kept up well enough to know that in Lot's family and servants, there are going to be at least 10 members, including in-laws. The Bible does not give us a specific number anywhere, but it does tell us how many in Lot's family were saved: Lot, possibly his wife and his two virgin daughters. No one else in his family, including his in-laws, including his sons, servants and any married daughters, were believers in Jesus Christ. How tragic for a believer in Jesus Christ to have a testimony so inadequate that less than half of the members of the family believe in Jesus Christ. All children have free will and it is possible to have a child who, no matter what you do, goes bad. However, how terrible for your personal testimony to sway less than half of your household.

**He said, "Please listen [lit., behold], I have taken [it] upon myself to speak to Yahweh: suppose there are found 20 there?" And he answered, "I will not destroy it for the sake of 20." Then he said, "Oh let not Yahweh be angry and I will speak again, but this once: suppose there are found there 10?" And he answered, "I will not destroy it on behalf of 10."** [Gen. 18:31–32]

Now Abraham desists; he has reached a number that comfortably represents to him the number of Lot's household which are saved. He is not worried for Lot and his family and ends his face to face prayer with Yahweh at this point.

**And Yahweh went when he had finished speaking to Abraham and Abraham returned to his place.** [Gen. 18:33]

**Application:** God knows how many believers there are in all of the 5 cities and yet he allowed Abraham to bring down the numbers at which God would protect and preserve the area. This allows us to see how our country can be this degenerate and still have God preserve us. We might be under discipline, but God has preserved the United States even though we have been in a downward spiral since the 50's. Many of the parents of the 50's experienced so much prosperity, that they became materialistic and less committed to their families than to their possessions; the children of the 60's reacted with hedonism and decadence and self-centeredness and even some of the their parents joined them. In the 70's and 80's, these 60's children became either highly materialistic, retained their lusts in hedonism and the lack of loyalty and lack of family values, or they became decadent minus the materialism but also retained their lusts in hedonism and lack of loyalty and lack of family values. They changed partners at will, committed adultery, both men and women, left children tragically standing in the wake. In their guilt, they have given their children, or their step-children every material thing known to man, but gave their children no values, no loyalty, no discipline, no character and no time. In fact they were in such guilt, that many would not even spank their own children and sought to restrain others from doing so, falsely believing that nonviolence at every level is the solution to our obvious downward spiral. In a society where we blame environment, we blame guns and we blame families for crime, but refuse to adequately punish the criminals in our misplaced guilt; in a society where half the marriages have one or both partners committing adultery, thus betraying their partner and betraying their children; in a society where over half the marriages fail and a far greater percentage of live-in's break up; in a society where a mind-staggering percentage of 13 and 14 year olds are

having sex outside of marriage; where young people begin taking drugs sometimes as pre-teens—God has still preserved our country because there are believers and there are believers who are growing spiritually, and for these few, God has continued to preserve the United States. As we have seen, with intercessory prayer, God will preserve a nation when there are less than 1% believers; however, the degeneracy of the society is almost beyond imagination under those conditions.

Why would a society with a higher percentage of believers like ours tend to be much more degenerate than other societies? There is at least a twofold reason for that: (1) Satan is going to concentrate his attacks on areas where there are a large number of believers; he does not need to attack or influence countries where the believing population is very small or fairly inactive. (2) When a nation has a reasonable number of believers and a reasonable pivot, that nation will be blessed with material prosperity and some people are swayed by material prosperity. It is unfortunate, but some people will not come to God unless they are crushed; I can personally testify to the truth of that, having been at one of the lowest points in my life when I looked toward God for help and guidance (and, subsequently, perhaps months later, believed in Jesus Christ). We have people dying at very young ages, modern science unable to keep pace with the debilitating diseases running rampant in our country, because sometimes this is the only way that they or members of their family might look to Jesus Christ face to face. I know personally that I might not have ever believed in Jesus Christ had I not been under pressure beyond my ability to deal with it.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 19** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 19

### Genesis 19:1–38

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

- v. 7 [Homosexuality](#)
- v. 29 [A Few Points on Sodom and Gomorrah](#)
- v. 38 [A Summary of the Life of Lot](#)
- v. 38 [The Abbreviated Doctrine of Moab and Ammon](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 19 reveals to us the tremendous degeneracy of the Sodomites, the escape of Lot, and concludes with incest. God the Son does not accompany the two angels into Sodom.

**Then the two angels came to Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he arose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth.**  
[Gen. 19:1]

Sitting where he was indicates that Lot occupied some position of authority in the city of Sodom. When these two strangers arrive, Lot is not worshipping them but he is behaving in a polite way. These are strangers to this area and Lot will show some of the training and upbringing that he has had. As we will see, he is probably the only person in all of Sodom who would greet strangers in this manner.

There was a time when it was assumed by historians that Sodom and Gomorrah were legendary cities, allegorical at best. Historians want to see anything which is in the Bible verified by outside sources, or they will not recognize its historicity. This is because they operate under human viewpoint and would naturally be skeptical and/or antagonistic toward the Bible. However, we have recently discovered what are known as the Ebla tablets which date back to the 24th century B.C. There are references to commercial trade between Ebla and Sodom and Gomorrah.

**And [Lot] said, "I pray you, my lords, turn aside I pray you to the house of your servant and spend the night and wash your feet then you may rise up early and go on your way." And they said, "No, we will spend the night in the street."** [Gen. 19:2]

Lot knew what was in store for strangers in Sodom. Any male stranger faced the probability of male rape and Lot was trying to get them into his home where they would be safe and from whence they could depart the next morning **early**. The angels are certainly aware of this; even though they are not omniscient, angels can scoot around fairly quickly—not subject to the same physical laws which we are, so they know what goes on in Sodom. Sodom is a party town, a town with almost 100% homosexual or bisexual population who stay up late, drink, imbibe, and engage in homosexual hedonistic practices. The angels know this. The remark of the angels about spending the night out in the street is known as peirastic irony; the words, or in this case, the question, is not spoken in the normal sense of irony but are said in order to test Lot.

**But he strongly urged them so they turned aside and entered his house. Then he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread and they ate.** [Gen. 19:3]



Lot has a real concern for strangers and has likely seen strangers accosted and probably were raped and killed. Lot is trying to see that this sort of thing did not happen. You'll note that he and Abraham are both brought up to take in strangers and to treat strangers with kindness and difference.

**Before they laid down [to sleep], the males of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old; all of the people to the last man and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have sexual relations with them." [Gen. 19:4–5]**

We have two different words translated from the same word in the Hebrew. *Males* and *men* are both ʾānāshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced *uh-NAW-sheem*]; also spelled ʾīyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced *ee-SHEEM*] (this is the plural form; and this means *man* as different from *woman*. There is often an emphasis upon sexual distinction and function. We do not have the entire population of Sodom here, assuming that there are some women in its population; however, this verse indicates that we are dealing with the entire or very nearly the entire male population of Sodom. Lot learned about these men long ago and had a fairly well fortified house. He does not open his door at night. Obviously, someone saw the angels accompany Lot to his home, and after some drinking and hanging out, the men decided to pay Lot a visit at his house. They call out to Lot, because he does not open his door at night to strangers; in fact, he doesn't even open the door to people that he knows. These violent homosexuals do not even deal with any cordial greetings; it is, "Where are the men? Bring them out so we can gang rape them." If all of the men are out in front of the door of Lot's house, this causes me to rethink the population. This would make me think that there are perhaps 100-800 men who have reached sexual maturity (above age 10). This would indicate a population in Sodom of perhaps slightly less than a 200 to maybe 1500. I am thinking what is likely based upon this incident and what Abraham interceded to the Lord with in the previous chapter.

The word *yâdaʿ* (יָדָעַ) [pronounced *yaw-DAHḤ*], which has a wide variety of applications (it takes up over 4 columns in BDB). It means *to know, to announce, to indicate, to discriminate, to distinguish, to have sexual relations with*. Context indicates when it this word has a sexual connotation, as it does here.

To me, one of the most disturbing aspects of our prisons is the prospect of homosexual rape. It would seem right that offenders should be executed. However, here we have the entire male population of five cities who are capable of such behavior. This is why God will destroy these five cities. There is no difference between the Old Testament God and the New Testament God; He did not become more gracious after the birth of Jesus. What we have here is incredible, almost unthinkable degeneracy, of which we are able to only glimpse a small portion of the depths of their degeneracy. We have possibly teens and pre-teens here who have been warped by their fathers into this kind of activity. This population needs to be destroyed.

**Lot went out of the door to them having shut the door after him and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly." [Gen. 19:6–7]**

Lot is selfish and self-serving, used to always getting his way, but living in Sodom, even he stands out as saintly next to these. Lot is mentioned in two passages in the New Testament. In Luke 17:28–29, our Lord is describing to the general population what the end times will be like. He does not focus in on the wickedness of the peoples of Sodom and the surrounding areas but upon their complete disregard for God and things spiritual. Those of Lot's day were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building. None of these things are inherently wrong. All of these things should be taking place in any normal population. However, the implication in this passage is that these were their only concerns; they had no thoughts of God, of their relation to Him or their responsibilities. Peter deals with the degeneracy of those in Sodom and Gomorrah in 2Peter 2:6–10. Lot is said to be vexed or oppressed and tormented by the sexual conduct and lawlessness of those around him.

When Lot exits, he immediately closes the door behind him; knowing that they would just enter and attack the male guests. He attempts to reason with them, to appeal to them. These men have no conscience, no concept of right and wrong, no relationship to God. There is no reason, insofar as they are concerned, not to act upon their perverted lusts. This goes beyond homosexuality; this combines homosexuality and crime. When we begin with the law, then we will look more carefully at homosexuality. However, just a few points should suffice:

### Homosexuality

- Homosexuality is condemned as a sin in the Old and New Testaments.
- Being born with homosexual tendencies does not excuse the sin of homosexuality.
- Most men have had (1) homosexual urges, (2) an homosexual experience, and/or (3) have experienced some mixed signals in their sexuality. This does not excuse homosexual behavior, which is a sin.
- It is likely that some men develop very early in life a tendency toward child molestation, toward sexual proclivity, or toward homosexuality. This does not make any of these behaviors acceptable or right in God's sight.
- Jesus Christ died for all mankind, regardless of their level of degeneracy and regardless of how they view themselves and their own lifestyle. Any homosexual, child molester, rapist and any person with any deviant behavior whatsoever can be saved by believing in Jesus Christ.
- Having known several homosexuals and having liked them (not like liked), I would, within limits, like to give them the right to be homosexuals with full approval from God; however, this is not the way it is.
- What might be easiest to understand is that there are some men who have a tendency to desire more than one woman, and even after committing to one woman, even in full sincerity, still fail in their marriage vows and commit adultery. It is a completely natural process and rooted in lusts that they have had since birth. Most men, particularly after several years of marriage, have some lusts toward other women. This is absolutely normal and common. However, being natural or common does not make it right or acceptable in God's sight. Homosexuality is viewed in the same way by God.
- In this context, homosexual behavior and criminality were linked, making it far more degenerate and requiring divine intervention.

#### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**"Please observe [lit., behold], I have two daughters who have not known man; please let me bring them out to you and do to them according to the good in your eyes; only to these men, do nothing for they have come under the shelter of my roof." [Gen. 19:8]**

When one noun is used to actually stand for another noun to which it is related, that is called a metonymy [pronounced *meh-TAHN-ih-mee*]. However, when two metonymies are involved and only one is actually expressed, then the figure of speech is called a double metonymy. *Roof* here stands for the entire house (of which the roof is a part); and then the house (which is not named) stands for protection. The shelter or the shadow of the roof stands for the protection afforded the angels by Lot.

Lot is a confused person, but then he is put into a very difficult situation. He does not have any idea how to prevent what could happen. There might be a full scale riot based upon homosexual lust, and there is nothing that can be done about it. Lot is a compromiser when it comes to his own character; he is willing to give up his daughters, which is also wrong. He has mixed intentions, some good, some wrong. He would like to preserve these angels (which he probably thinks are just male strangers) and provide them with a safe haven. On the other hand, he is willing to allow his daughters to be raped by this degenerate gang. Their reaction tells us that their hearts have become hardened. I believe that homosexuality is one of those degenerate sins that the more often one engages in it, the more difficult it is to come back to heterosexual behavior. That is, if a person who from birth has homosexual tendencies, if he does not give in to these tendencies, then God has provided a right woman or a life of celibacy for him (which are the two options for all men). However, each homosexual act hardens their heart in this regard and places them in a position of unrestrained homosexuality.

**However, they said, "Stand back!" Also they said, "This one [Lot] came as a visitor [an alien] and now he would play the judge? We will deal worse with you than with them." And they pressed hard against the man Lot and drew near to break [into pieces] the door. [Gen. 19:9]**

I cannot imagine a more frightening situation than the one that Lot is in. He is in a hopeless situation. He is surrounded by men who despise him for judging them and their behavior; who are filled with homosexual lust for the two visitors; and they are ready to do sexual violence to the angels and worse to Lot. Lot is powerless here. He can only depend upon God, but, you will notice, that he does not call upon the name of the Lord for deliverance. He has panicked and has totally lost his spiritual perspective which he took for granted with Abraham.

**But the men put forth their hand and brought Lot to them into the house, and they shut the door. [Gen. 19:10]**

What has happened is the angels are pulling Lot toward them; he is standing in front of the door, and then the men entered into the house, holding Lot by the scruff of his neck. Then they shut the door. Since they have reached out and grabbed Lot, this would indicate that they have pulled him into the house, so that they are all inside of the house at this moment.

**And the men from the door of the house they caused to strike with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves groping for the door. [Gen. 19:11]**

My guess is that this was a courtyard plan, where the front door acted as security and led into a large courtyard. There was possibly another door or opening to the rest of the actual house. The towns people were milling all about the house, suddenly struck with blindness; and now dealing with their blindness that has overshadowed their homosexual urges. God will do to them what we should do to the homosexual rapists in our prisons; they will be executed.

**Then the angels [lit., the men] said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here? Sons-in-law, or your sons, or your daughters, or any one you have in the city? Cause them to be brought out of this place for we are about to destroy this place; for their outcry has become great before Yahweh and Yahweh has sent us to destroy it." [Gen. 19:12–13]**

These are two angels; they are not theophanies. There is nothing in this chapter to indicate that they are doing anything other than carrying on the plan of Yahweh. Abraham is at home thinking that everything is copacetic in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, however Lot is given the word that there will be judgment brought upon these cities. He is given the option to get out under God's direction.

**Application:** When a national entity is judged and destroyed, God will deliver some or all of the believers from His judgment.

**So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters, saying, "Get up and out from this place for Yahweh is about to destroy the city," but he seemed to be jesting in the eyes of his sons-in-law. [Gen. 19:14]**

At various times in history, there have been a variety of ways that marriage comes about. One way is that two young people are contracted to marry one another and they are considered married during that time, even though they live separately and remain virgins. However, the betrothed are called sons and daughters in-law. At some point in time, they consummate their marriage; but this had not come to pass yet. When we marry, we are to marry believers and hopefully believers who are spiritually growing. Lot and his family are believers, yet his daughters chose to marry unbelievers (or Lot allowed them to marry unbelievers). However, Lot personally has no testimony. He goes to these young men and tells them that the city is about to be destroyed; they certainly have known someone who has been stricken with temporary blindness, yet they believe that Lot is kidding. They do not take him seriously. How tragic to be related to eternity and have no testimony to those who are closest to you.

**And when morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Arise! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here so that you are not consumed in the punishment of the city." [Gen. 19:15]**

The Hebrew word for angel is *mal'âk* (מַלְאָךְ) [pronounced *mahl'-AWK*], which means *messenger* and can refer to one sent with a message, to a prophet, to an angel, and to an angelic theophany. It is in this passage that we see that those two *men* were actually angels. The angels have made it completely clear that it is time for Lot to get up and leave town. When the two daughters who are with him are mentioned, this indicates that he might have other daughters who are not living at home, who are married and living in unbelief with other unbelievers. We have already seen that Lot is not the epitome of the growing, spiritual giant; he can barely hold his own spiritually. His testimony is nothing to anyone except for his two daughters and his wife; and even here, his testimony is not worth much. We will see why in the next verse; Lot cannot follow through. He can begin a good fight, but he cannot end it.

**However, he lingered so the men seized [him] by his hand and his wife and his two daughters, Yahweh being merciful to him, and they brought him forth and set him outside the city. [Gen. 19:16]**

Can you imagine that God has had His angels speak to Lot directly to warn him of impending doom and they have even told him that it was time and he still dinks around. It is no wonder that he has no testimony. It takes very little to destroy your spiritual life in the eyes of others and this is why many believers need to keep their mouths shut immediately after becoming believers. For some people, 5–10 years might be a reasonable amount of time to keep their Christianity a secret to all those except for the Christians that they fellowship with. Notice God's grace; the angels grab Lot and they haul him out of the city, along with his wife and two daughters. God couldn't be any more gracious. One of the reasons that God is so patient with Lot and gracious enough to haul him out of Sodom is his relationship to Abraham. God blesses on the basis of His own character and God chooses to bless those who are related to mature believers. This is blessing by association and we find it throughout the Bible. God told Abraham that He would bless other nations in him. We will find that all of Abraham's progeny will be blessed because of their association with him. *Lingered* is in the Hithpael, which is the reflexive intensive. It is an intense moment and Lot is choosing himself to dink around the house. He just cannot fully believe what God is about to do.

**And it came to pass when they had brought them forth that he [possibly they] said "Escape for you life; do not look back [lit., after you] or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills so that you will not be consumed." [Gen. 19:17]**

V. 17 begins not unlike Gen. 1:2; the verb is the Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which could be translated *and it was, and it came to pass, and it so happened, etc.* The imperfect means that the action is not viewed as a completed whole; that is, several times while the angels were hauling them out away from Sodom, they were told to flee. *Said* is in a corresponding Qal imperfect. *Mâlaṭ* (מָלַח) [pronounced *maw-LAHT*] means *to rescue*, but it is in the Niphal imperative. The Niphal is the passive form of the Qal and it can be used to describe action which is in progress. The angels are hauling Lot and company out of there, but are urging them to continue escaping; and since God is providing for them this deliverance, they are being told to continue allowing God to deliver them. The entire valley was under judgement. We do not know where exactly these cities were. Most scholars think that they are found in the shallow southern portion of the Dead Sea today. I have reason to believe that these cities could be to the West or the North of the Dead Sea, but am not that interested in defending those ideas. Lot and family were the only ones spoken of in the Bible who were led so that they were able to survive.

The last verb is the Niphal imperfect, 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular of *çâphâh* (צָפַח) [pronounced *saw-PHAWH*] and it appears to have two distinct meanings. It appears as though there is the connotation of *adding to*, which is found in Num. 32:14 Deut. 29:19 Isa. 29:1 30:1, but there is also the connotation of *being consumed* or *being destroyed* as in Gen. 18:23, 24 Isa. 7:20. The Niphal, again, is the passive voice and Lot would receive the destruction. The 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular means that the angel is speaking directly to Lot as they are hauling him

and his family out of the city. This tells us why God sent two angels; two angels each have two hands, just enough to grab and haul Lot, his wife and two daughters out of there.

**Then Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lords, please observe your servant has found grace in your sight and you have shown your great kindness which you have performed for me in saving my life, but I cannot be taken to the hills lest this disaster does not overtake me and I die." [Gen. 19:18–19]**

Lot liked living in Sodom and he is hoping for some kind of a compromise. Maybe if he settled in a smaller town with just a couple other families; maybe he could remain there instead. Lot is a master of compromise, which is why he found himself in Sodom to begin with and why he finds it hard to leave.

**"Please observe that city [over there] is close enough to flee to and it is a little one. Please allow me to escape there ([is] it not small?) and my soul will be saved." [Gen. 19:20]**

Lot is unclear as to why Sodom is being destroyed along with the other four cities. He does not appear to recognize the full extent of its degeneracy. He thinks that the problem is the size of the city and that he just needs a house in a small town. He certainly has a reputation throughout Sodom and the rest of the area, and that reputation might buy him something (since he left all his belongings back in his home). He is also quite tired.

**He said to him, "Observe, I have granted you this request [lit., behold, I have lifted up your countenance with regard to this thing] that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Quickly escape there for I cannot do a thing until you arrive there." Therefore, the city was called Zoar. [Gen. 19:21–22]**

There are several widely varying ways of translating v. 21b. The KJV reads: "See, I have accepted you." The NASB: "Behold I grant you this request [thing] also." John Owens translates this "Behold, I grant you also this favor." EB: "Behold, I have lifted up your countenance [or, accepted thee] even as to this thing." The word usually translated *behold* is the demonstrative particle *hinnêh* (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*] (the dagesh found in the "n" doubles it; one of the two primary uses of the dagesh when it comes to pronunciation. *Behold* is the proper way to translate this word, but it sounds so dated. It can be translated *lo!*, which suffers even further from anachronism. It is a word to grab your attention or to focus upon a certain person, thing or thought. A more updated version of this word might be *see here, observe, certainly, look at this if you will, see this, listen, listen up, witness*. A translated should communicate and keep the reader from becoming befuddled by meaning or distracted due to anachronistic words and phrases.

The verb is the Qal perfect, 1<sup>st</sup> person singular of *nâsâ* (נָסָא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*] and this verb means *to lift, to carry, to take, to lift up, to bear*. The perfect tense means that this is a completed action or an action viewed as a completed whole. 1<sup>st</sup> person singular means the subject of the verb is *I*. What has been lifted is *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-neem'*] which is the masculine plural with a 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular suffix. The word means *face, countenance, presence* and it is generally found in the plural, but the meaning as we are familiar with it is in the singular. Every language has words which are in the plural, but the meaning is generally singular; in the English we have the word *pants* as a for instance. The suffix should be translated *your* (singular). In the Hebrew, this is followed by the word for *also* and the preposition *ל* with a definite article and the masculine singular of *dâbâr* (דָּבָר) [pronounced *daw<sup>b</sup>-VAWR*], which means *word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command*. The *lâmed* prefix means *for, with regard to, towards, with reference to*. This is followed by a demonstrative adjective which we usually translate as *this, that, which*.

Now to try and pull these components together: "Observe, I have lifted up your countenance with regards to this thing." Lifting up the countenance means that the angel has made Lot smile, so to speak (the Hebrew language uses a great many specific actions which stand for emotions, thoughts and intangible concepts). Lifting up Lot's face, means to do that which would make Lot happy. The angel is saying *you ask for it; you got it*.

God is continually gracious to Lot and allows him to stop at that small city. Since the actual location of Sodom is unknown, the location of Zoar is also unknown. Zoar means *small, insignificant*. The angels have been given specific instructions to withhold judgement of Sodom until after Lot and company have removed themselves (or, in this case, have been removed).

**The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.** [Gen. 19:23]

Here is an area which is sometimes dismissed by critics. We know that the sun does not actually rise and set, but this is language of accommodation, even used by the scientists of our day. However, as we have seen in our study of inspiration, in areas where the Bible deals with science, it is exceptionally accurate, revealing truths which were not known until the past couple hundred years.

**Then Yahweh rained brimstone and fire [or, burning brimstone—see below] on Sodom and Gomorrah from Yahweh out of heaven and He overthrew those cities and all the valley; all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground.** [Gen. 19:24–25]

With v. 24 we have an interesting figure of speech, which might help to explain what has occurred. It is called a hendiadys [pronounced *hen-DIE-a-dees*] which means from two things, only one thing or one idea is intended. This is what *brimstone and fire* are; they do not stand for two things coming out of the sky but one: *brimstone*, but not just brimstone—but *fiery brimstone*. I have heard this phrase many times and never really knew what was being spoken of, but knowing this figure of speech makes me inclined to believe that this could be a great earthquake accompanied by volcanic activity. Brimstone is an old English word for sulphur, a yellowish, non metallic substance which melts at 113° C and when burned, it gives off a noxious, suffocating sulphur dioxide gas. It is primarily found in the cap rock of the salt domes in the Gulf coast of the United States, in sedimentary beds and in regions where there has been volcanic activity.

V. 25 is an example of alternate parallelism:

- (a) The cities (and He overthrew)
- (b) The valley (and all of the valley)
- (a) The inhabitants of the cities
- (b) The produce of the valley

**But his wife looked behind him and she became a pillar of salt.** [Gen. 19:26]

The word for *become* does not mean that her entire physical structure was changed into salt. We do not know what happened exactly and must speculate. She has somehow become encrusted or covered with salt to where she could not move. The area that she has come from is the valley around the Dead Sea, so the salt is there. *Look* is in the Hiphil stem (causative), imperfect tense (intermittent or continuous action). Whatever happened to Lot's wife seemed to freeze her in her tracks. She was possibly covered with a sulfurous explosion which included a great quantity of salt. A sulphurous rain of salt and molten sulphur which covered her and *froze* her in her tracks, leaving a statue of salt behind. There have been ancient historians which claim that this salt statue was there for millenniums afterward, but I am not so certain that I buy that. Josephus claimed that he had seen a pillar, which was this crumbling, crystalline rock associated by tradition with Lot's wife.<sup>54</sup> Other writers of the first couple centuries A.D. claimed to have seen it themselves. This is not as weird as it might seem, because salt is a preservative, and some meats are preserved for a long time with salts; so it is not impossible to imagine a combination of salts preserving the body of Lot's wife.

In any case, soon thereafter, this formation was no longer to be found. Certainly what is involved here is divine discipline. Her continually looking back and stopping to look back was not one out of wonder and amazement concerning God's judgement of the five cities, but one of longing and desire. Her spiritual life was over and probably had been for some time. Much more importantly was she became a lesson taught by our Lord. In Luke 17:22–37, Jesus told the disciples about His second coming (which they were unlikely able to understand,

<sup>54</sup> *Antiquities* I.xi.4

but someone remembered it well enough for Luke to record this). During mid-tribulation, when it is time to leave Jerusalem, the inhabitants are to leave immediately without stopping to make extensive plans, to return to take items ,etc. The point of the lesson here was to "*Remember Lot's wife.*" Much of the Old Testament was recorded for our benefit and edification, even though we are not under the Law. This is one of those passages which will have application in the far future. Many thousands of lives will be saved when the abomination of desolation goes up in the temple because they will remember Lot's wife and they will have read what our Lord told the disciples. The way that this will be understood and followed is, as people are leaving Jerusalem because of the abomination of desolation being set up, they will know to leave and keep going, and not to look back. Like many statements in the Old Testament, the full impact of this passage was not revealed until our Lord's first advent.

**And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood there before Yahweh and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the face of the land of the valley and behold and, observe, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace.**

[Gen. 19:27–28]

If Abraham is settled in around the hills of Jerusalem, when he looks down, he is going to be looking at the north or west side of the Dead Sea, which is one of the reasons that I do not see Sodom and Gomorrah as being south of the Dead Sea. This tells us that the destruction of these five cities was tremendous and could be seen for miles around. This was not a quiet plague or a small amount of devastation; the entire town went up in flames.

**So it was that when God destroyed the cities of the valley; however, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when He overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.**

[Gen. 19:29]

Notice that Lot is not delivered because he is a believer, but he is delivered because Abraham is a mature believer and he has prayed on behalf of Lot. This is blessing by association. We can be associated with mature believers in a number of different ways and received mercy because of that.

### A Few Points on Sodom and Gomorrah

- ❑ God would have delivered Sodom if there had been even just 10 believers living there (Gen. 18:32). This is blessing and protection by geographical association.
- ❑ God delivered Lot because he was related to Abraham and because Abraham prayed on his behalf (Gen. 19:29). This is blessing by being related to a mature believer.
- ❑ Those associated with a mature pastor-teacher are blessed by association in two ways: (1) they are blessed by his accurate teaching and (2) they are blessed by just being in the same congregation with him.
- ❑ Those who are associated with a mature believer in the workplace, by family, in a social circle, in any kind of an organization or geographical area: any of those associations with a mature believer result in blessing given by God to these people.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

A minor point of syntax in v. 29; sometimes a plural is used, but only a singular is meant; this is often cleared up by putting in the words *one of*. Lot did not live in all the cities that God overthrew; he lived in one of the cities that God overthrew. However, they cities were all in close approximation with each other, so they were treated as a whole. A similar use is found in Gen. 8:4 Judges 12:7 and Neh. 3:8 (as examples).

**Now Lot went up out of Zoar so he dwelt in the hills and his two daughters with him, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar so he dwelt in a cave; he and his two daughters.** [Gen. 19:30]

The two angels, having been given permission by God, had given Zoar for Lot to live in. However, the severe destruction of Sodom and the turning of his wife into a pillar of salt caused Lot to worry a great deal. God had just rescued him from the greatest destruction and judgement of his time and now Lot does not trust God enough to

remain in Zoar. Obviously, he recognizes that there is a depravity in Zoar similar to that in Sodom; however, Lot was not fully cognizant of God's plan and was unable to understand the way that God worked. Since they lived in the hills in a cave, Lot's daughters did not have a great deal of social life. Lot no longer had any sons and his daughters, having lost their fiancées in the destruction of Sodom, never quite recovered. So Lot has separated from sin and from sinners (which is what believers often think they must do) and that choice has not been helpful or wise.

Recall that it was not too long ago when Lot and Abraham were at odds because they both had too many possessions and they could not keep track of their wealth and there was not enough land to feed all of their flocks. Notice what Lot has now: two daughters and a home in a cave. Lot never showed any outward signs that he had grown much as a believer. He was a believer for about the same time as Abraham was a believer. Both of them failed many times and Abraham grew and Lot did not. Lot is not unlike that person in church who has been a Christian for twenty years and has an outward moral life, yet is filled with legalism.

**And the firstborn [daughter] said to the younger, "Our father is old and there is not a man on earth to come in to us [to have sex with us] after the manner of all the earth." [Gen. 19:31]**

There is the correct kind of separation and the incorrect type of separation. This is not the way to do it. With doctrine and growth, Lot and his daughters could have lived within the city limits and all could have remained spiritually pure. However, none of the three got with the program; none of them grew spiritually. There are very small pockets of believers who go off the deep end because they do not have the opportunity to be taught by a mature pastor-teacher and they do not have other Christians which will help to keep them focused. I knew a lot of people who listened the Thieme's tapes and, when given the opportunity to gather with other believers who were listening to his tapes, chose not to and they are the ones who often seemed to be a bit askew; a little off the deep end. The association with other believers when possible is absolutely necessary. Without this fellowship, we will see Lot and Lot's daughters act in a very peculiar manner.

**"Come, let us make our father drink wine and we will lie with him that we may preserve through our father offspring." [Gen. 19:32]**

This is obviously an idea which is out of whack with God's plan. There is no reason to preserve Lot's line and there is not reason that they become desperate. However, their father is confused and they are confused. A father-daughter sexual union is never condoned in the Bible, even though there was marriage between brothers and sisters and possibly between brothers and half-sisters near the beginning of humanity, that kind of incest found in this passage has never been a part of God's plan and the Law teachers that it is anti-God (Lev. 20:11, 12, 14, 17, 19–21). Lot does have some morality and this teaches us the obvious fact that drinking can cause us to lower our moral standards.

**So they made their father drink wine in that night and the first-born went in and lay with her father. He did not know when she lay down or when she arose; and on the next day, the first-born said to the younger, "Notice, that I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also and then you go in and lie with him that we may preserve offspring through our father." [Gen. 19:33–34]**

It is clear by this verse that they got Lot pretty drunk. He got to a point where he did not realize altogether what was occurring. This is confused thinking on the part of his daughters; and a mistake on his part to be drinking as he did. There is no divine precedent set for this kind of behavior. They are all pretty far off the grid. However, recall where they had lived—they lived in Sodom, which had gotten so bad that, God destroyed it because of the sinfulness of the people there. So they are not guided by what Lot should have learned from Abraham; these women are guided by the behavior which they observed in Sodom. This actually seemed like a reasonable idea to them.

**So she made their father drink also that night and the younger arose and lay with him and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. [Gen. 19:35]**



This gives one the idea as to how degenerate Lot's own family was due to living in Sodom. Even though the Law had not been yet given, still his daughters realized that there was enough wrong here that they had to get their father so drunk that *he did not know when she laid down or when she arose*. Whether this statement is literal or a figure of speech, it indicates that Lot was quite inebriated when all of this occurred. He was drunk enough to essentially be suffering blackouts. This could even indicate that excessive drinking was a normal part of Lot's everyday life since blackouts are usually signs of alcoholism.

The affects were far-reaching. As a teenager, there were certain sins which I committed, the affects of which are with me even today. What Lot's daughters did here will be a curse upon Israel for centuries to follow. The affects of their sins, which seem somewhat inconsequential in retrospect, two acts of drunkenness and two acts of incest (where the father was not the aggressor) will cause the nation Israel problems for a millennium.

**Thus, both of Lot's daughters were with child by their father: The first-born bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day; and the younger also bore a son and she called his name Ben-ammi [lit., son of my people]—he is the father of the Ammonites to this day. [Gen. 19:37–38]**

The LXX gives the additional information *called his name Moab, saying from my father*. This is possibly an obscure word from the Sodomites which she used and it could be simply tradition. Nevertheless, the Moabites eventually settled East of the Dead Sea, 4300 ft. above it. The territory that they settled in was 60 miles in length at their strongest and 30 miles in length at their weakest. They had settled quite a number of cities (Num. 21:28–30 23:7 Isa. 15:1–2). Zodhiates called them *prosperous, arrogant and idolatrous* (Isa. 16:6 Jer. 48:42). God pronounced severe judgement against them in Isa. 15–16 25:10 Jer. 48:42–44. When Israel began to establish herself as a nation, Moab feared the size of the population of Israel and were involved in the hiring Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22:1–21). It was at this time that the Israelites had requested to pass through Moab and the Moabites refused. Moab was so degenerate that God would not permit the intermarriage of Moabites and Israelites (Num. 25:1–9). They even joined with Babylon to war against Judah (2Kings 24:2). However, the one bright spot in the history of Moab was Ruth, who is in the line of David and therefore in the line of our Lord's humanity (Ruth 4:13–22 Matt. 1:1–17).

The Ammonites also occupied an area east of the Dead Sea, just above the Moabites. They were in conflict with Israel early on and they oppressed Israel (Judges 10:7–9). Israel decisively defeated them during those days (Judges 11:32–33). Zodhiates called them *cruel, covetous, proud, vindictive and idolatrous*. (Judges 10:6 Ezek. 25:3, 6 Amos 1:13 Zeph. 2:10). They had become a viable, political entity by the time of Moses and Joshua (Num. 21:24 Deut. 3:16) When Israel first began to possess the land, God did not give to them the land of the Ammonites (Deut. 2:19–21, 37) which is why they are not mentioned in the song of Moses in Ex. 15 or in Num. 23, 24. The Ammonites eventually regrouped under an Ammonite king Nahash, centuries later, and caused King Saul some grief (1 Sam. 11). However, the Ammonites seemed to have a truce of sorts, perhaps even an alliance, if you will, with King David both prior to and during his reign until King Nahash died (2Sam. 10). However, once the Ammonites had been decisively defeated by Judah, their relationship with Israel and King David improved considerably (2Sam. 12:26–31, 17:27–29). Solomon's harem contained Ammonite women and they caused him to worship their false God (1Kings 11:1–8). The Ammonites' blood even became a part of the royal family in 1Kings 14:21. Again, what God has done is taken an ugly incident from history, one which resulted in a great deal of conflict and strife, and worked things together for good.

This chapter is the last time we will hear of Lot except in retrospect. Here is the **Doctrine of Lot**.

### A Summary of the Life of Lot

1. Lot was Abraham's nephew. Gen. 11:27
2. Lot's life will be contrasted with Abraham's throughout Gen. 11–19. They are both clearly believers, but God will differentiate between these two men. The idea is, not all believers are equal. Lot has every bit the potential that Abraham has, in the spiritual realm, but he will never really act on it.
3. Lot originally moved up the Euphrates river with Abraham's family, and then went with Abraham to the

## A Summary of the Life of Lot

- Land of Promise. It is not clear how much Lot or Abraham really understood about moving to this land that God had promised Abraham. Gen. 11:31 12:4
4. Given that Abraham was 75, Lot was probably anywhere from 20–40 when he moved with Abraham. This is based upon the fact that, when Abraham is fathering Isaac (past when he ought to be able to, at age 99), Lot is normally capable of fathering children. The Bible is quite careful about documenting the age of Abraham. However, Lot's age can only be deduced or guessed at. Gen. 18 compared to 19:31–38
  5. Lot did acquire a wife, and had two daughters and probably sons, but we know most of that from Gen. 19. Nothing is said about Lot's wife in Gen. 12:4–5 13:1 when he moved to the Land of Promise with Abraham; so he *probably* acquired a wife later.
  6. At some point in time, Lot developed his own business as a rancher right along side Abraham. Gen. 13:5
  7. Essentially, Lot was blessed by his association with Abraham. Gen. 12:3 13:5
  8. However, at some point, Lot's and Abraham's possessions became so great that, they went their separate ways because they could not keep the overflow of their wealth separated. Gen. 13:5–12
  9. Lot chose to live among the people of Sodom (Gen. 13:10–12), whom God saw as being very sinful (Gen. 13:13) and Abraham lived at times among the Canaanites and others who were quite respectable (example: Gen. 20).
  10. Similarly, Abraham's relationship with those that he interacted with was usually quite good (example Gen. 14) where Lot's could be strained (Gen. 19:9—which is not necessarily a negative reflection on Lot).
  11. The people of Sodom and that general area were apparently under the threat of discipline from God, and they had been under the 4<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline (controlled or taxed by an outside power) and were going into the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline (where they would be removed from their land and put into slavery). Gen. 14:1–12
  12. When Abraham heard about this, he rescued Lot, the people of Sodom, and was blessed by developing a relationship with Melchizedek, the priest of Salem. Gen. 14:13–24
  13. This rescue by Abraham of those which did not deserve it, sets him up as a type of Christ, delivering those who are undeserving of salvation, and then entering into the throne room of God. Gen. 14
  14. When God and two angels come to Abraham, they promise him that he would have a child by Sarah in the coming year, and they also tell him of the destruction of Sodom, where Lot and his family live. Abraham prays that God will preserve the city if there are 10 believers there. However, Abraham miscalculated the number of believers there, and God destroyed the city. However, God delivers Lot and his family from this destruction, answering yes to the desire of Abraham's prayer. Gen. 19:1–29
  15. The last that we here of Lot directly, in his historic context, is, his daughters will get him drunk, have sex with him, and raise up sons gotten by incest with their father Lot. Gen. 19:30–37
  16. However, so there is no confusion, when the angels came to Lot, he did go out of his way to protect them, and, when the angels told Lot that he had to grab a few things and leave, he did. Gen. 19:1–17
  17. Lot is essentially mentioned two more times in the Old Testament and twice more in the New Testament. He grandsons, by his daughters (that sounds icky just to type that) were given a piece of property and God told Israel that they could not take it from them. Deut. 2:9, 18–19
  18. Interestingly enough, Lot is not included in the genealogies of 1Chron. 1–9.
  19. However, the psalms speak of Lot's progeny developing alliances with other countries to fight against Israel. Psalm 83:2–8
  20. Jesus refers to the times of Lot in Sodom, where people are marrying and giving in marriage, which simply indicates that, the men of that area were simply living from day to day without a relationship with God. He also warns us to remember Lot's wife, and her choice to look longingly back to Sodom. Luke 17:28–32
  21. Peter acknowledges that the sins of the Sodomites weighed heavily on Lot (which may have explained another reason why he watched the city gates for strangers coming into that city). 2Peter 2:7

One might say that Lot lived somewhat of a mediocre Christian life; he often zigged when he should have zagged, and it was apparent, from the actions of his daughters that, although they feared God, they did not really take the time to understand who God is; and it appears that Lot did nothing to encourage their learning about God.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Also, now would be an excellent time to examine The [Doctrine of Moab and Ammon \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)).

Here are a few points from the Doctrine of Moab and Ammon:

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Moab and Ammon

1. Lot was Abraham's nephew. Although they went to the Land of Promise together, they eventually split up. Lot ended up in Sodom and Gomorrah. He was rescued from there by Abraham before God rained down fire and brimstone, destroying this degenerate people. He moved to a cave with his two daughters (his wife turned to a *pillar of salt* when she looked back upon this city), and these women decided that their prospects for husbands were poor. They moved from a vibrant and degenerate pair of cities off to no man's land, and they were concerned that they would never have children. Today, they would have gone to a fertility clinic. However, what they did was, on two consecutive nights, they got their father drunk and had sex with him, and each bore a son, one's name was Moab and the other was Benammi (*son of Ammi*). These two became the progenitors of the nations of Moab and Ammon. Gen. 19:30–38
  - 1) It is important to recognize what is going on here. These women have either rejected the doctrine of right man/right woman or they do not know enough basic doctrine to even know this.
  - 2) What these women did here was not only a degenerate mistake, but a complete rejection of what God is able to provide.
  - 3) They looked at their situation—they used to live in this great and wonderful city with lots of men (this is from their viewpoint) and now they live in a cave with their father.
  - 4) God is able to provide.
  - 5) The focus of these women needs to be upon their own souls, not upon their immediate circumstances.
  - 6) An example of such faith will be Ruth, a Moabite, whom we will study in this doctrine.
2. Fausset contrasts the people of Moab with the people of Ammon: *Moab was probably the more civilized half of Lot's descendants; whence we read of the plentiful fields, hay, summer fruits, vineyards, presses, songs of those who tread grapes, of Moab (Isaiah 15 16 Jeremiah 48): Ammon the more fierce, plundering, predatory Bedouin-like half; whence we read of their threat of thrusting out the right eye of all in Jabesh Gilead (1Sam. 11:2), ripping up pregnant women in Gilead (Amos 1:13), treacherously murdering, as Ishmael, Baalis' agent, did (Jer. 40:14 41:5–7), suspecting and insulting their ally David to their own ruin (2Sam. 10:1–5 12:31).*<sup>1</sup>
3. Although Moab and Ammon had been kept from easily intermixing with the Jews for 10 generations (because of their treatment of the Jews when the Jews were going through the desert), this did not mean that a Moabite or an Ammonite could not come into Israel as a convert to worshiping Jesus Christ, the God of Israel. Deut. 23:2, 46 Neh. 13:2
4. After the Israelites had spend nearly 40 years in the desert wilderness, they began to move north along the King's Highway east of the Dead Sea. Part of this involved going through the territories of Moab and Ammon. Num. 21:11–24
  - 1) The King of the Moabites, Balak, became quite concerned about the Israelites moving through his territory (particularly since they had just conquered the Amorites), and he hired Balaam, who apparently was a believer in Jesus Christ and a prophet, to curse the Israelites. Balaam ended up blessing the Israelites instead. Num. 22–24 Joshua 24:8–10
  - 2) God said that the people of Moab and Ammon should have met Israel with bread and water instead of with hostility. For this reason, Moab and Ammon would not enjoy a spiritual relationship with God side-by-side with the Jews. Deut. 23:2–5
  - 3) When the Jews marched northward along the east side of the Dead Sea, they fought against the enemies of Moab and Ammon, and this should have engendered some good will from Moab and Ammon. However, overall, it did not.
  - 4) However, the real problem was when the Israelite men became interested in the daughters (women) of Moab, and got involved in idolatry because of their desire for these women. Num. 25:1–9

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Moab and Ammon

- 5) Although there were wars with Moab and Ammon, God did not want Israel to take from them their land. Deut. 2:9, 19, 37
- 6) Because they are first cousins, Moab and Ammon should have been natural allies of the Jews. Furthermore, since God gave them plots of land and forbade Israel to take it, there should have been mutual respect between Israel, Moab and Ammon, if not an alliance. However, from the very beginning, Moab and Ammon treated Israel with contempt.
5. Because of Moses' sin in the desert wilderness, he was not allowed to go into the land. However, God took him to a high mountain in Moab to see the land that God would give to Israel. He died there and was buried in a valley in Moab. Deut. 32:49–50 34:1, 5–6
6. There were hostilities between Israel and Moab and Ammon during the time of the Judges. The greatest problem of Israel was chasing after their gods. Judges 3 10–11
7. During the time of the Judges, an Israelite named Elimelech moved his family to Moab because of a famine in Israel. His two sons took for themselves Moabite women as wives. The father and his two sons died, and one of the wives, Ruth, went to Israel with her mother-in-law Naomi. Ruth the Moabite eventually married a relative of Naomi's, which paints a picture of Jesus Christ as our kinsman-redeemer (and, in this case, redeeming a Gentile). The Book of Ruth.
  - 1) Ruth may have seen herself as in a hopeless situation.
  - 2) She could have written off her mother-in-law, Naomi, as just some woman, because Ruth's husband was dead.
  - 3) However, Ruth believed in the God of Naomi, the God of the Jews, Jesus Christ.
  - 4) She had faith to come with Naomi back to the Land of Promise.
  - 5) Even though Ruth came to the Land of Promise as a foreigner (in the eyes of some) and as poor, God looked out for her.
  - 6) God saw to it that she met and married her right man, a man that she probably loved more than Naomi's son.
  - 7) Ruth made man correct choices in her life, and these choices led her to a wonderful marriage with a noble man. Two of the choices were (1) she worshiped the God of Naomi and (2) she looked after her mother-in-law.
  - 8) Ruth stands in stark contrast to the daughter of Lot, who believed that she needed to shortcut God's plan. Lot's eldest daughter rejected the God of Abraham, she rejected the doctrine of right man/right woman, and she had sex with her father in order to have a child. This is a woman out of control, without authority over her, and without a clear value system. Ruth, on the other hand, trusted in the God of Naomi, the God of Abraham, and God took care of her.
  - 9) In the end, we do not even know the name of Lot's daughter. However, we know who Ruth is and that she is in the line of Jesus Christ.
8. Saul developed a life-long fan club in Jabesh-Gilead by defeating Nahash the Ammonite, who threatened to not only enslave these people, but to gouge out their right eyes. 1Sam. 11
9. Saul faced many enemies early on, including wars with Ammon and Edom. He was a very successful warrior. 1Sam. 14:47–49
10. David and the Moabites and the Ammonites:
  - 1) David, when being pursued by Saul, took his parents to the King of Moab for safekeeping. It is possible that the King of Moab did this because he was enemies with Saul; however, it is just as reasonable that, because he had been defeated by Saul, that he was more open to normalized relations with Israel. 1Sam. 22:3–4



## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Moab and Ammon

- 2) David had to go to war against Moab and soundly defeated them. He killed some of their soldiers and made the others pay tribute. 2Sam. 8:2 1Chron. 18:2
- 3) David had an early run-in with the new King of Ammon, a son of Nahash, whose nobles turned him against David. Ammon brought in Syria as an ally so that Israel would have to fight on two fronts. David sent his two top generals to fight against Ammon and Syria and Israel was victorious. 2Sam. 10 1Chron. 19
- 4) While being disciplined for the Bathsheba incident (the wife of the soldier mentioned above), David's army was still victorious over Ammon. The Ammonites were made slaves of David's. 2Sam. 12:26–31 1Chron. 20:1–3
- 5) Interestingly enough, when David was on the run from Absalom (his son, as a part of the discipline for his affair with Bathsheba), Shobi, the son of Nahash the Ammonite (see 1Sam. 11), brought food and supplies to David and his army. 2Sam. 17:26–29
11. Some of the women who Solomon married or kept as mistresses were Moabite and Ammonite women. Such foreign women turned his heart away from God toward their heathen gods. Solomon build sanctuaries to Chemosh, a god of Moab and to Molech, a god of Ammon. Worship of these gods included human and even child sacrifice (although it is unclear whether it went that far with Solomon's wives). 1Kings 11:1–3, 5–7
12. Solomon's son Rehoboam, who reigned over the southern kingdom circa 931–913 B.C., was half-Ammonite. 1Kings 14:21, 31 2Chron. 12:13
13. There continued to be conflicts between Kings of Judah [Jehoshaphat (870–848 B.C.), King Joash (835–796 B.C.), King Uzziah (circa 767–740 B.C.), Josiah (640–608 B.C.), Jehoiakim (608–697 B.C.)] and Moab and Ammon. 2Chron. 20 24:23–27 26:8 27:5 2Kings 23:3–15 24:1–3
14. After Zedekiah (597–586 B.C.) rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar put Gedaliah in charge as governor of the few people who remained in the land. Several Jews who ran for their lives began to return from places like Moab and Ammon. The King of the Ammonites successfully plotted against Gedaliah. Jer. 40–41
15. The Prophets and Moab and Ammon:
  - 1) Amos prophesies against Moab and Ammon. Amos 1:13–15 2:1–2
  - 2) Isaiah prophesies about the destruction of Moab. This apparently would be fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar. Isa. 11:10–14 15–16 25:10
  - 3) Zephaniah prophesies against Moab and Ammon, promising that they will be like Sodom and Gomorrah. Zeph. 2:8–9
  - 4) Jeremiah prophesies against nations which have been against Israel, which includes Moab and Ammon. This appears to refer to the coming of Nebuchadnezzar as well as to the final judgment against Moab and Ammon in the end times (not to those nations in particular, but to nations which occupy those areas today and which nations display unrelenting hatred for Israel). Jer. 9:25–26 25:17–38 27:1–9 48 49:1–6
  - 5) Ezekiel prophesies about the sword of Babylon coming into Jerusalem and Ammon. Ezek. 21:19–32 25:1–12
  - 6) Daniel predicts the destruction of Moab and parts of Ammon. Dan. 11:41
16. A partial history of one Moabite King, Mesha, is found on what is called the Moabite Stone, which dates back to approximately 900 B.C.

The complete doctrine can be found at [www.kukis.org/Doctrines/Moab\\_ammon.htm](http://www.kukis.org/Doctrines/Moab_ammon.htm)

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: Ammon (some slight editing).

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

**Genesis 20** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 20

### Genesis 20:1–18

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

**Introduction:** Chapter 20 places Abraham in a similar situation to Gen. 12, when Abraham failed a test of trusting in God. Unfortunately, he does not fair much better in this chapter either. The purpose of a chapter like this is that, God has promised Abraham great things in previous chapters. These promises are related to Abraham's obedience to God. However, it is important to recognize that Abraham never achieved some semblance of sinless perfection. This chapter records one of his failures, so that we are not ever confused by the fact that after salvation, we will sin. There is no one who has lived at any time who did not sin after they were saved (unless they died 30 seconds later).

**From there, Abraham journeyed toward the territory the Negev and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur and he temporarily dwelt in Gerar.** [Gen. 20:1]

This would put Abraham southwest of the Dead Sea. We are not always told exactly why Abraham picks up and moves from point A to point B, except that God had commanded him some time ago to walk the length and the breadth of the land which He had given him (Gen. 13:17). What will occur is another test; Abraham failed this test the first time and he will, essentially, fail this test again. However, it might be important to point out that when we fail a test, we have not necessarily completely failed that test. Abraham will fail the test here; he will be corrected severely by an unbeliever; and, if he ever was faced with the same choice again, Abraham would have made the correct choice.

**And Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech, king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.** [Gen. 20:2]

Sarah is probably reasonably attractive, even though she is 90+ years old in this chapter. It is likely that Abimelech desires a political alliance with Abraham as a rich, nomadic chieftain (as Zodhiates puts it). Abraham, like all believers, has a Christian life with its high and its low points. This is a low point.

**But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she [is] a man's wife."** [Gen. 20:3]

It is clear from this verse that God spoke to people in their dreams and it is unclear whether Abimelech (which is probably a title for a king, like Pharaoh, rather than a proper name) is a believer or not, however, he will believe in Yahweh during this dream.

**Now Abimelech had not approached her so he said, "Lord, will You slay even a righteous people?"** [Gen. 20:4]

*Righteous people* are the two familiar words *tsaddîyq* (צַדִּיק) [pronounced *tsahd-DEEK*] and *gôwy* (גוֹי) [pronounced *GOH-ee*], the former meaning *righteous* or *justified* and the latter meaning *nation, people, gentile or heathen*. Abimelech understands adultery and the fact that it is wrong, even as a gentile.

**"Did not he himself say to me, 'She is my sister' and she herself said, 'He is my brother'? In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands, I have done this." [Gen. 20:5]**

*Integrity of heart* means that Abimelech had no intention of doing wrong; he did not plot or choose to do evil in God's sight. *Innocence of hands* means that he has not had sex with Sarah; that is, he has not sinned against God and committed adultery. He is asserting that he is blameless in his motivation and in his actions.

**Then in the dream God said to him, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this and it was I who kept you from sinning against me; therefore, I did not allow you to touch her." [Gen. 20:6]**

*Integrity* is the word *tôm* (תֹּם) [pronounced *tohm*] and it means *completeness, integrity and innocence*. In this context, it is a combination of the latter two. The sense here is that his heart is *whole* or *complete*. Therefore, it is not duplicitous; it does not go off into two directions; there is not a hidden agenda of evil. One might sense a double standard with Abraham and Sarah; God has not allowed Sarah to be violated by another man; however He allowed Abraham to copulate with Sarah's servant, Hagar. However, God did not use Abraham for 13 years after that incident, and Sarah and Hagar were also disciplined. Furthermore, they all lived together which was even worse than discipline. Two women under the same roof where one is haughty and the other is jealous is awful pressure for the two women and for Abraham. No one gets away with anything under the justice of God. God sometimes withholds discipline and withholds the pain that we believe someone deserves, but He will see to these things.

**"Now, then, restore this man's wife for he [is] a prophet and he will pray on your behalf and you will live; but if you do not restore her, know that you will certainly die; you and all that are yours." [Gen. 20:7]**

*Nâbîy'* (נָבִיא) [pronounced *naw<sup>b</sup>-VEE*] began as a nontechnical word that means *spokesman* or *speaker*. Whereas, this is not clear in this passage, it is more clear in Ex. 7:1 where Moses is complaining to God that he just is not articulate enough to represent God, so God tells Moses that his brother Aaron will fill in for him when it comes to speaking to Pharaoh. The word, beginning as spokesman then meaning God's spokesman, finally came to mean prophet as we almost correctly understand it. I say *almost* because what people focus on when they hear the word *prophet* is prophecy, but that is not its primary meaning. A prophet is one who speaks for God; sometimes this includes the foretelling of events and sometimes it does not. Nevertheless, the person is still a prophet.

God has set up a very clear delineation here of the crime and the punishment and he will allow this Abimelech the free will to make his choice. If he believes in Yahweh, he will obey and if he does not, he will ignore the dream. This is why we know that he is a believer. Despite Abraham's duplicity, God still uses this opportunity to confront Abimelech. God has always combined all things together for good.

**So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them [lit., in their ears] all these things and the men were very much afraid. [Gen. 20:8]**

It is marvelous that Abraham can do something this foolish, and yet God uses this opportunity to witness not only just to Abimelech but to his entire household. Their fear shows that they believed God and believed the actuality of the discipline which God had promised. It is ironic that Abraham should be a witness to Abimelech and to his household; however, it is Abimelech who will witness to his own household, having just believed in Yahweh. Furthermore, they find his witness credible.

**Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you don to us? And how have I sinned against you that you have brought upon me and my kingdom a great sin? Things that ought not to have been done, you have done to me." [Gen. 20:9]**

Abraham, who has been a believer in Yahweh for decades, is morally corrupt before Abimelech, who may possible have been a believer for 3 hours (we do not know when he trusted in Abraham's God). Abraham lied to him as



a stranger, did not trust God himself, and placed Abimelech in a situation where he could have lost his life and the lives of those in his household. Abraham has such a poor testimony here. And yet God takes this mess and works it all together for good (Rom. 8:28).

**Furthermore, Abimelech said to Abraham, "What were you thinking of that you did this thing?"**  
[Gen. 20:10]

Abimelech can hardly believe it; Abraham is related directly to God; he has walked with God for decades; how could he do this kind of thing to a stranger who has done him no harm? In our own lives, as believers, we are carefully scrutinized by unbelievers for imperfections. If that bothers you, then you should not reveal to anyone that you believe in Jesus Christ. *What were you thinking* has recently entered into our language. This often describes some of the things that we do as believers in the Lord.

**Then Abraham said, "Because I thought [lit., said] there is no fear of God at all in this place and they will kill me because of my wife; and, besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother and she became my wife."** [Gen. 20:11–12]

Abraham assumed the worst about this place; and furthermore, even if the land was filled with heathen, he is protected by the living God, so it is even worse that he has not trusted in God and His protection. This verse is often quoted to prove that Sarah was his half-sister. That is a distinct possibility, but remember that this is a direct quote from someone who has just lied to this king before so there is an equal likelihood that Abraham is thinking quickly on his feet and lying once again.

**"Furthermore, it was God Who caused me to wander from my father's house; I said to her, 'This is the kindness you must do for me: at every place which we come to, say of me, He is my brother.'" [Gen. 20:13]**

At least here we have an improvement in Abraham's behavior. This reminds me of Adam at the fall; Adam immediately blamed God and blamed the woman for the fall, even though he knew exactly what he was doing. Here, Abraham begins to blame God, stops mid-sentence, and instead of blaming Sarah, takes the blame himself and says that he has asked her to say this. This may not be the best improvement over what has gone before, but it is some improvement.

**The Abimelech took sheep and oxen and male slaves and female slaves and gave [them] to Abraham and restored to him Sarah his wife.** [Gen. 20:14]

Abimelech was the one who was lied to and had possibly faced death because of Abraham; still, being the bigger man in some ways, gives to Abraham more riches. What was done is a mess and God has worked everything out for good. Abimelech as believed in God, as has his household; Abraham has been fully chastised for his improper behavior by Abimelech; and God has increased Abraham's wealth in His matchless grace. Abimelech is acting out of fear and respect for God and Abraham's obvious relationship to God.

**And Abimelech said, "Behold, my land before you where it pleases you [lit., in the good in your eyes] dwell."** [Gen. 20:15]

Abimelech owns a great deal of the land, being the local ruler and he recognizes God's promise to Abraham (or realizes that Abraham has some reason to dwell in this land) and he gives a portion of his own land to Abraham to live on. Abraham does not live on this land, but he is allowed to live on it wherever he chooses. God's grace is coming through Abimelech.

**To Sarah, he said, "Observe, I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother. Here, he [is] to you the covering of eyes; to all who [are] with you and before everyone." Thus she was reproved.** [Gen. 20:16]

Abimelech's first sentence is simple enough. When he says that he has given the silver to *her brother*, he is being sarcastic. What he says next is not difficult to understand once you have the correct translation. He begins with the demonstrative particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*] and it means *behold, lo*, but both of those words sound so *Old English*. I often translate this *observe*, but the connotation is slightly different. A little emphasis is lost, but a more readable translation is gotten if we translate this by the word *here*. This is followed by the personal pronoun in the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular and there is no verb; we supply the word *is*. This is followed by the lamed preposition with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine suffix, and this could be translated *your* or *to you* and it is a direct reference to Sarah. Then we have the phrase *the covering of the eyes*, which is a reference to a veil, which is a type of protection for the woman. Abraham is her veil; her protection (not her lies). The remainder of his quote is simple enough: *to all who are with you and before everyone* (the verb was supplied).

What follows is the simple conjunction *and* along with the Niphal participle feminine singular of yâkach (יָכַח) [pronounced *yaw-KAHK*] and it means *to be corrected*. The Niphal stem is the passive, so she has received correction. *And she was corrected* is correct, as is *thus she was reproved*. Abimelech is attempting to make everything right. He has given the silver to Abraham on her behalf; rather than Abraham's lies or her lies, Abraham himself is her husband, her veil, her protection. As a husband, he functions in this capacity before all who are with them and to everyone else. Then God the Holy Spirit records the divine interpretation of this: *she was thus reproved* or *thus she received correction*.

He is careful to point out that she has not been violated; all who are with her can verify that she is vindicated. Abimelech is careful to point this out because he is honestly fearful of the living God. The point he is making is that the silver is a gesture of his good will, that he did not violate her and it is a material apology for what has happened.

**Then Abraham prayed to the Elohim and Elohim healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves, and so they gave birth.** [Gen. 20:17]

**Then Abraham prayed to God and healed Abimelech and his wife and his female slaves so that they bore children, for Yahweh had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.** [Gen. 20:18]

Abraham intercedes on behalf of Abimelech. It is amazing that Abraham is failing time and time again, but God allows him the chance to again pray on someone else's behalf. There are people among us that we never know about who pray several times daily on our behalf. Their spiritual life may appear to be relatively unspectacular, but in eternity we will see that they play an important function in the edification of the body of Christ. Just as a quarterback has all the glory as he runs through a line; he could not do it without the blocking of those in front. People who pray often act as our blockers; we don't even know that they are there sometimes, but without their persistence before the Lord of Glories, we would fall flat on our faces day after day. Here Abraham shows a bit more growth. He prays on behalf of the man who just rebuked him for his wrong behavior and Abraham still has the presence of mind to act as an intercessory between God and Abimelech.

We do not have a time frame for the time that Sarah was in the harem of Abimelech; it sounds at first as though it was one night and then God spoke to him; but the curse upon his household is not something which could have been discerned in the space of a day or even a week. This indicates that this took place probably over the space of at least a month and possibly three or more months. Abimelech has a great many slaves and wives and is populating his kingdom with his children through these. Suddenly, there are no more children from his household. This would have taken time to notice and God would have certainly allowed Abimelech a certain amount of time to realize that there are no children being born to his household.

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

**Genesis 21** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 21

### Genesis 21:1–34

**Introduction:** Chapter 21 covers 3 incidents: (1) the birth of Isaac, (2) the dismissal of Hagar from Abraham's compound, and (3) a covenant is established between Abraham and Abimelech.

**And Yahweh visited Sarah as He had said and Yahweh did to Sarah as He had promised.**

[Gen. 21:1]

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *pâqad* (פָּקַד) [pronounced *paw-kad'*] and it means *to attend to* or *to visit*. The context determines whether this is with friendly or hostile intent. There is a parallelism here:

Yahweh visited Sarah

as He had said

and Yahweh did to Sarah

as He had promised

The last word is the Piel perfect of *dâbar* (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*] and in the Qal it means simply *to speak*, however this is the intensive stem and *to promise* is a reasonable rendition. What was done is God had to make Sarah fertile again; He had to open up her womb. The results were immediate.

**And Sarah conceived and bore to Abraham a son in his [Abraham's] old age at the time of which God had spoken to him.** [Gen. 21:2]

One aspect of the Old Testament which I find fascinating is there is no miracle or confusion about the birth of a child; a child is first conceived and then it is born. There is a two-step process recognized by the writers of Scripture from the beginning. This goes all the way back to Gen. 4:1–2. This verse indicates that this birth is the one that God had promised. Abraham has already sired one child, whom God has rejected as heir of Abraham and the promises He made to Abraham, and Abraham will have other children also. However, this is **the** child, the line of Jesus Christ, the line of the Jewish race.

**And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him; whom Sarah bore him: Isaac.**

[Gen. 21:3]

God had promised Abraham this son and God had already given the child a name, Isaac (Gen. 17:19), which means, as we have noted, laughter. Sarah thought the idea of her bearing children at age 90 was humorous and laughed inside herself as she eavesdropped on Abraham and the Lord, so God, in His matchless humor, named their son *laughter*.

**And Abraham circumcised Isaac, his son, when he was eight days old [lit., a son of eight days] and God had commanded him.** [Gen. 21:4]

Circumcision was to be the sign between God and His people. Circumcision set them apart from the rest of the human race. Every circumcised Jew should look and see that this is a sign that God had promised Abraham that at 100 he would sire a son who would be the line of the Messiah and through this son, Abraham would be the father of the Jewish race.

**And Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac his son was born to him. And Sarah said, God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.** [Gen. 21:5–6]

The last preposition could mean *at*, *over*, or *concerning*, but *with* is probably closer to the correct meaning as we understand it. This would not be a laughing of derision but a laughing of shared humor and joy.

**And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle children; yet I have borne him a son in his old age."** [Gen. 21:7]

The bulk of these past few chapters have been straightforward narrative not requiring a great deal of exegesis to understand. Having waited many decades (we do not know how long Abraham and Sarah had been married), Sarah is bubbling over with enthusiasm about the birth of her son. She is finally understanding and believing in God with a greater strength of faith.

**And the child grew and was weaned and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.** [Gen. 21:8]

Abraham is even more indulgent with this child than he was with Ishmael. He has attempted to intercede and have Ishmael to be the child of promise, but to no avail. It was not in God's plan for that to happen.

**But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, [the son] whom she had borne to Abraham with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman will not be heir with my son Isaac.** [Gen. 21:9–10]

Sarah had never overcome her feelings about Hagar and about Ishmael. Those were 14 or so long years where Hagar, an inferior slave, bore to Abraham a son, which Sarah had not been able to do. This combined with her jealousy over Abraham having slept with Hagar (even though it was Sarah's idea) made it impossible for Sarah to live under the same roof with Hagar.

While Ishmael was young, and separation from the Abraham compound would be too difficult for Hagar and Ishmael, God required Abraham to keep them there.

At this time, even though Sarah demanded this separation possibly due to mental attitude sins, God required the separation anyway. Ishmael was a gentile and Isaac was a Jew. Abraham will have but one Jewish son, Isaac. His son Ishmael and his other sons and all of their descendants will all be Gentiles.

**This thing was very displeasing in the eyes of Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "[Do] not be displeased in your eyes because of the lad and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, you do as she says [lit., hearken to her voice] for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.** [Gen. 21:11–12]

Abraham got into this trouble because of listening to Sarah in the first place. He should have inquired of God as to the reasonableness of Sarah's plan. There is nothing wrong with listening to the voice of your wife, particularly if your wife is intelligent and spiritually mature. However, Abraham was the head of the household, he made the decisions, and in the case of fornicating with Hagar, this should have been put before Yahweh if he had any confusion concerning this union. Now, although Abraham loves his son Ishmael, his first born, he has to separate Ishmael from his family because Ishmael is not an heir to Abraham.

**"Furthermore, concerning the son of the slave woman I will make a nation [from] him because he is your offspring."** [Gen. 21:13]

As has been mentioned previously, this is blessing by association. Ishmael will be a wild ass of a man and God will bless him merely because he is Abraham's son.

**So Abraham arose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and give [these] to Hagar, putting [them] on her shoulder, and, along with the child, sent her away and she departed and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheba. [Gen. 21:14]**

The word order can be a tad bit confusing here. The provisions and the child were not put on Hagar's shoulders; the *child* is 13 years old. *Along with the child* goes with *and sent her away*. Abraham gave them an early start and gave them provisions, and sent them off. For some reason, it does not sound as though he gave them a sheep or any other kind of animal.

The code of Hammurabi had been in effect for some time; it was the law code from Mesopotamia, from whence Abraham had originally come. Abraham's treatment of Hagar is in exact accord with this code. The code itself was fairly complex and its complexity answers critics who do not believe that such a complex code could have been written during the time of Moses. According to Scofield, many of the unusual customs and behaviors that we find in the book of Genesis, stem from the Code of Hammurabi, which was apparently well-known at that time. Recall Rom. 2:14–15 **For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things in the law, these, having not the law are a law unto themselves. Who outwardly demonstrate the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and witness and their thoughts between each other accusing or else excusing one another**

Beersheba had not been named at this point in time. This was written in retrospect, not as a diary. So several years after Gen. 21:31 was written, when Beersheba was named, was when this was written. There are numerous places in Scripture where the writer alludes to a particular place and names it by its more modern name so that the reader can identify where it is that he is speaking of. This also, in some instances, helps us to pinpoint when a portion of Scripture was written; that is, when a city is named, that means the Scripture was written after the naming of that city. The alternative view is, this name of this place was changed to the more modern name after the fact.

**When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes and then she went and sat down over against him a good way off about the distance [lit., the shooters of] a bowshot. Therefore, she said, "Let me not look upon the death of the child" and, as she sat over against him, she lifted up her voice and wept. [Gen. 21:15–16]**

They were apparently walking to Egypt and this skin of water was not enough to get them very far. Her son had been overindulged (spoiled) and was unable to take charge of the situation as some young men that age could do. God had already promised Abraham concerning this son and it is not clear whether Hagar knew of these promises or not (see Gen. 17:20). Hagar has not appealed to God. She is only talking to herself.

**And God heard the voice of the lad and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the sound [or, noise] of the lad where he is. Arise [and] lift up the lad and hold him fast with your hand. I will make him a great nation. [Gen. 21:17–18]**

Hagar is a believer but she is out of fellowship. She has possibly been out of fellowship for the better part of the past fourteen years. She did not pray to God and God, when He called to her, had not heard her voice, but the sound of the lad. Qôwl (קול) [pronounced *kohl*] can mean *voice* or *sound*. Had she called to God in fellowship, He would have responded to her because of her prayer. God is responding to her because of Abraham.

**Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water and she went and filled the skin with water and gave a drink to the lad and God was with the lad and he grew up and he lived in the desert and became an expert with the bow [lit., growing up a bow]. {Gen. 21:19–20}**

There were two kinds of blessings given here: blessing by association and logistical grace. Hagar, who did not call upon God's name and did not deserve to be kept alive, was saved, as was her son. God provided the basic necessities on their behalf as a part of logistical grace. Even having seen this and having lived with Abraham all

of this time, they could have been great spiritually, but they were not. Merely because of God's relationship to Abraham were they preserved and eventually prospered.

**He [Ishmael] lived in the desert of Paran and his mother took for him a wife from the land of Egypt.** [Gen. 21:21]

Paran is not a desert as we think of one. A desert is a sparsely occupied wilderness area. The desert of Paran is a broad desert-wilderness plain in the east central portion of the Sinai Peninsula, directly north of the Red Sea. Israel will cross through this desert during the Exodus (Num. 10:12 12:16 13:3–26). David fled to Paran after Samuel's death (1Sam. 25:1).

Once they had some water and settled into this area, Ishmael learned to hunt for food, an immediate necessity at which time he finally begins to grow up. He became responsible for his life and for his mother's life.

As was done quite often in those days, the parents would find the husband or wife for their children. This is not a bad practice. During the time in which we live, we find men and women sampling each other, choosing several different mates when the others have not worked out, and people make, in general, very poor choices for themselves; and with all this, the breakup of marriages in at **roughly 40%** in the U.S. and the breakup of marriages who lived together first is higher and the breakup of those who just live together is higher yet. The point being is that the parents of a young person are smarter and wiser, in general, know by experience which attributes are important (attributes that people who choose marriage partners for themselves underestimate) and have their child's best interests at heart. One can never depreciate parental input when it comes to choosing a partner for one's life. Certainly there are parents who want to run a child's life up until age 60; however, many of them do so with their child's best interests at heart.

I believe that Abraham is the author of this portion of God's Word late in life. He certainly loved Ishmael and did what he could to learn of Ishmael's whereabouts and life. The information following their expulsion from his household is sketchy, possibly obtained from God directly, but likely from his own servants.

The quick movement from the expulsion of Ishmael and Hagar, to a short dissertation on their life and then back to a covenant with Abimelech suggests that this is all the same author. With the details about Abraham's life and the lives of those Abraham knew, it seems ridiculous to suggest that Moses wrote the first draft of Genesis. Moses may have edited it, but most if not all of Genesis was likely written down by other authors and then copied word-for-word by Moses under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

We now leave Ishmael in the desert with his wife and mother and return to Abraham, concerning whom much of Genesis is about. Abraham is not just a nomad with a wife, a child, and a couple of servants. We have already seen how he pursued and defeated 4 kings; here his presence is formidable enough to the king of Gerar to require that king ally himself with Abraham.

**And it came about at that time that Abimelech and Philco, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. Now, therefore, swear to me by God here that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity but as I have dealt loyally with you, you will deal with me and the land wherein you have sojourned."**  
[Gen. 21:22–23]

Spoke is in the masculine singular because only one of them spoke these words. This is the same Abimelech that Abraham had lied to concerning Sarah in chapter 20. It is clear to Abimelech that God is on the side of Abraham, regardless of the way that he behaved at times. Also, Abimelech, a believer in the Revealed God (Jesus Christ in His preincarnate form), recognizes the importance of allying himself with Abraham. Abimelech is a man of honor and a man of principal, as Abraham should be, and he remembers what how Abraham deceived him. He desires this alliance, but emphasizes the honesty factor.

**And Abraham said, "I will swear." When Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized, Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing. Furthermore, you had not informed me [of this before] and I also had not heard [about it] until today." [Gen. 21:24–26]**

The information found here, unlike the previous verses dealing with Ishmael, are so detailed that no one other than the participants would have remembered and recorded these things. A well near Abraham's place of occupancy was of extreme importance to Abraham and his livestock. Although Abimelech had given him carte blanche to live wherever in his realm he chose, this was useless when his water supply was cut off or reduced. Abimelech was not aware of this, and, although it is not stated, his concern is implied and his involvement on Abraham's behalf would probably soon follow.<sup>55</sup>

**So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave [them] to Abimelech and the two men made [lit., cut] a covenant and Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs of the flock and Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is the meaning of seven ewe lambs; these which you have set apart?" He [Abraham] said, "Seven ewe lambs you will take from my hand that you may be for me a witness that I dug this well." [Gen. 21:27–30]**

Abraham first gives the sheep and oxen to Abimelech as a sign of his good faith, and then culls out seven lambs to show that he personally had dug the well which the men of Abimelech had seized. This is likely some kind of custom in those days which has been lost to history. In order to live, Abraham required water, and Abimelech had allowed him to occupy any portion of land that he chose. Therefore, there was nothing wrong with Abraham digging a well. Likely this well was dug some distance from where they camped and out where they were grazing their many herds. Some of Abimelech's men liked the area, liked the well, and required that it be given to them. Abraham had not mentioned that this was taken from him until they met to make a treaty. During this process is the ideal time to air grievances.

**Therefore he called that place Beer-sheba because there both of them swore an oath. [Gen. 21:31]**

*Beer* means *well* and *sheba* means *seven*. Some claim that it means *well of the oath*, and many translations translate this as *therefore he called the place Beer-sheba because there both of them swore an oath*. However, the word *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], *therefore*, can refer only to an antecedent statement. *The New Bible Dictionary* claims that the particle translated *because* should be translated *when* because it introduces an independent temporal clause; the previous statement tells why it was done and this statement tells when it was done. However, BDB, for the Hebrew word *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] gives the basic meanings *that*, *for* and *when*. Strong's claims that it is a causal participle, indicating causal relationships of all kinds, whether antecedent or consequent. If anything, those in the early portion of the Old Testament were notorious for word plays, and I would think that it is likely that both meanings were in Abraham's mind when he named this well. ZPEB agrees with this.

These wells are major achievements. *The New Bible Dictionary* mentions one well from this area which was 12¼ feet in diameter, the water was forty feet down, and the digging of the well involved going through 16 feet of solid rock. So when Abraham claims a well, it was after a great deal of work and the survival of his household and his herds depended upon these wells.

**So they made [lit., cut] a covenant at Beer-sheba. Then Abimelech and Philco, the commander of his army, rose up and returned to the land of the Philistines. [Gen. 21:32]**

This portion of Scripture has been thought by some to be in error. We recall the Philistines as being a sea people from 1200 B.C. The primary reason for doubting this reference is that there is no corroborating evidence that the

---

<sup>55</sup> This could be interpreted another way. If Abimelech was less than honorable, he could have had that well seized in order to force Abraham into a pact with him. However, there is nothing revealed in Scripture thus far to indicate that he would be this duplicitous.



Philistines lived in this land at this time. In fact, we do not know from whence they originated in secular history. For this reason, some scholars state unequivocally that they did not occupy the land of Canaan during Gen. 21. It is claimed that at best, this was added later by another author. However, lack of corroborating evidence is not enough reason to dismiss a clear passage of Scripture. Groups of people change and go through various transitions. Here, the Philistines appear to be generally speaking, on good terms with Abraham and there is no indication that they are a sea-faring people. However, they could have come with the early Aegean trade and migration. Historians for centuries doubted the historicity of the Hittites; they looked upon Sodom and Gomorrah as purely legendary and unhistorical. This did not make the Bible incorrect; eventually the Bible was vindicated for its accuracy in these two cases. So it will be with the Philistines. They are a real people who occupy the land with Abraham and they have a different relationship with Abraham than their ancestors will have with his ancestors later on in history.

We do have more references to the Philistines during the time of Samson, as an enemy of Israel. They are geographically located in the same place as we find them here; there are just more of them and they have become enemies of Israel (Judges 13–16). Time-wise and population-wise, this would make sense.

**He then planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba and there called on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned [lived temporarily] in the land of the Philistines many days.** [Gen. 21:33–34]

Periodically, throughout Abraham's life, the Bible reveals that he called upon God's name. The Bible certainly does not reveal every instance in which this was done; however, it mentions many of the times. Abraham believed God and God was as real to him as Isaac and Sarah. It sounds as though the Philistines are somewhat larger than Abraham and company during this time period and they apparently had a good relationship. It is also possible that this is a gloss (i.e., the Philistines did occupy this area, but it is not clear whether they were occupying this area at this time; a later copyist indicated that this became the land of the Philistines).

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 22** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 22

### Genesis 22:1–24

**Introduction:** Chapter 22 is one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. The more and more I study the Old Testament, the more I see Christ revealed in a way which seems obvious to us today, but it would not be obvious to those living during OT times. L.S. Chafer points out that salvation by faith in Christ seems to be more perspicuous in the New Testament than in the Old. Salvation does occur by faith in Yahweh Elohim in the Old Testament, and there is an indication of a sacrifice involved, but given only the Old Testament, it might be difficult to understand what would transpire on the cross until after the fact. I believe that the judgement of Jesus Christ for our sins on the cross was unknown in those specifics to the people of the Old Testament and to Satan. Satan engineered the capture and persecution of our Lord and saw to it that He would be convicted and I do not believe that Satan would have done that, had he known in advance that our Lord would die on our behalf for our sins during His crucifixion. And if Satan didn't know this, it would follow that no one else knew exactly what was to transpire on the cross until after the resurrection. Satan was outsmarted and outflanked by the cross and he is perhaps the most intelligent created being that there is; so if he did not know, again, it is likely that no one else knew either. And it would be likely that he did not know for two reasons: (1) he entered into Judas to see that Jesus was betrayed over to the Jewish religious leaders, and (2) had he realized that our Lord would die for our sins on our behalf, he would have done his best to prevent the crucifixion.

The reason that chapter 22 is so important is that we have in shadow form the crucifixion of our Lord. We have the father's son being put on the altar to be sacrificed; this is the father's only-born son—that is, the one in Abraham's spiritual line. The son is innocent and goes willingly to be sacrificed. Then there is a substitution of a ram without spot and without blemish. All of this early on gives us a picture, somewhat obscure, of what is to come. This picture was recorded over 4000 years ago and still has meaning for us today.

A really good murder mystery is the kind that there are liberal clues, yet you cannot determine who the murderer is until the very end. Then, all of a sudden, it all seems so clear and obvious and everything which transpired all of a sudden falls into place and makes sense. This chapter by itself, the Levitical offerings, Isa. 53 and other Messianic passages, do not to those who read them soon after they were written necessarily read as Jesus going to the cross to bear out sins. However, in the light of what happened and in retrospect, it suddenly seems so obvious that we often make the mistake of thinking that believers in the Old Testament understood this as well. I do not believe that to be the case.

Abraham will offer up his son to God as a sacrifice in this chapter as an act of obedience. At no time is there any indication that Abraham understood that he was bringing about one of the greatest types to be found in all the Old Testament. I believe that he simply did what God told him to do; and that all of this was understood as simple obedience, along with a trust in God's promises which still stood.

On the other hand, God knew all along what was to occur; the cross was always a part of His plan and He revealed this to us; we just did not recognize it until after the fact. Then suddenly, all these Messianic passages and these types make perfect sense. In fact, these things make so much sense that some believers have a hard time believing that Abraham, Moses, David and Jeremiah were never really in on it as we are.

**And it was after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham." And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Please take your son, your only son whom you love—Isaac, and go to the**

**land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." [Gen. 22:1–2]**

An offering with fire refers to judgement.. Abraham is approximately 110 years old (Isaac is a young man, probably not yet a teenager). Ishmael is gone from Abraham's life forever. He absolutely loves his son Isaac. This is, in fact, the first time the word *love* is used in the Bible. In the past 40 years, Abraham has gone from a little trust in our Lord to no trust to a little more trust back to no trust, etc. This is going to be the spiritual high point of Abraham's life. It will just about be the high point for Isaac's spiritual life too. God has outlined what He expects Abraham to do from the start and Abraham goes along with this willingly.

The land where this takes place is likely the mount upon which Solomon built his temple. 2Chron. 3:1 tells us that Solomon built his temple in the hills of Moriah. The word possibly *Moriah* possibly means *provided, or shown by Jah [God]*. It has been suggested that this was the hill of Golgotha. In any case, we are speaking of a considerable journey here (70 miles of so). Is such a journey possible? I recall in the days of the presidential emphasis upon fitness, that 50 mile walks were encouraged, and these, since most people could complete them during daylight hours. Given that Abraham is traveling for a period of 3 days (Gen. 22:4) over a rugged terrain, and given the fact that we are speaking of several hills in this vicinity, it is quite reasonable that Abraham has traveled all the way from Bathsheba to Jerusalem.

**So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him and Isaac, his son. Then he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place which God had told him. [Gen. 22:3]**

All of this took time. Abraham and Isaac had a lot of time to think this over. Isaac could have run away while Abraham was out chopping wood and Abraham could have pulled a *Jonah* and took off in the opposite direction. Isaac did not know what was going to happen; Abraham did.

I would have thought that his young servants would have cut the wood, but the verb is in the Piel imperfect, which is the intensive stem; it took awhile for him to cut that wood. The causal stem as not used. Abraham did the chopping himself.

**On the third day, Abraham looked up [lit., lifted up his eyes] and saw the place afar off. [Gen. 22:4]**

The young men were brought along to probably carry the chopped wood for the altar. Abraham would chop the wood; the young men would carry it; and Abraham would ride the ass. When they got to the mountain, the young men would wait below, the wood would be loaded onto Isaac, and Abraham would walk with his son Isaac up the mountain.

Given the length of this trip—2½ days—it is not unreasonable to suppose that Abraham and company have traveled all the way to Jerusalem, to the hill of Golgotha (there are several hills in the Jerusalem area). Now, do not presume that I have pulled this idea out of the air. They are in the land of Moriah (v. 2), which is where Solomon was said to have built the first Temple (2Chron. 3:1).

**Then Abraham said to his young men, you stay here with the ass and I and the lad will go as far as here and worship and come again to you. [Gen. 22:5]**

*As far as here* is a pronoun coupled with an adverb and the implication is that Abraham is pointing toward a particular mountain. The Hebrew word used for *young men* is na'ar (נָעַר) [pronounced *NAH-ġahr*] allows a great deal of latitude with the age—anywhere from an infant (3 years old; Ex. 2:6) to an adolescent (17 years old; Gen. 37:2).

Three days is a long time. There would have been some talking. The two servants and Isaac were not aware that it was Isaac who was to be offered yet. Abraham recognizes that God has promised him the land and an

uncountable number of ancestors through Isaac, so he is not afraid for Isaac. He knows that these things must be fulfilled somehow through Isaac. He doesn't know how, but guesses that God will resurrect Isaac or do something to keep Isaac alive after the sacrifice. The verbs *go*, *worship* and *come* are all in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural. This means that Abraham fully expects for **both** of them to go, to worship and **to return**. Abraham has offered hundreds of sacrifices to God and not once has an animal ever gotten up and walked away after being offered on the altar. Still, Abraham is fully convinced that both he and Isaac will return.

*Worship* is the Hithpael imperfect of the Hebrew word *shâchah* (שָׁחָה) [pronounced *shaw-KHAW*] and it means *to bow down, to prostrate oneself*. The Hithpael is the intensive reflexive stem. 99% of the time this word is found in the Hithpael in the Bible. Abraham and Isaac will act upon themselves to worship God; literally, to prostrate themselves before God. As we will see, this is not a physical action of the body, but a state of the soul. Isaac will be tied to an altar and Abraham will stand above him with a sacrificial knife in his hand. There is no physical bowing here; the respect and prostrating themselves occurs in their souls in their obedience to God.

**And Abraham took the wood of the burn offering and laid it on Isaac his son and he took the fire in his hand and the knife. So they went both of them together.** [Gen. 22:6]

People who do not have the full picture object to this passage. They see this as a meaningless ritual in which Abraham almost kills his son in the name of religion just to prove himself to God. When the Law is given, it will be clear that child sacrifice is strictly forbidden (Lev. 18-20). God will not require Abraham to kill Isaac and Abraham believes God to the point to where he knows that Isaac will somehow return with him after his sacrifice. All of God's promises to Abraham are based upon Isaac and the line of Abraham through Isaac. So God must preserve Isaac's line.

The spiritual purpose here is a picture of God offering his only-born son on our behalf as a sacrifice. It is a picture of God the son's obedience to His father. Isaac readily takes the wood and agrees to his father's plan. For the Jew who knows the Old Testament, when he observes our Lord on the cross and reads this passage, it should suddenly come to him that this portion of Scripture, these actions of faith by Abraham, are a foreshadowing of the good things to come. This is a one-time command by God made only to Abraham to sacrifice his only son to God. God has never again before or after required anyone to sacrifice their son.

**And Isaac said to Abraham his father; and he said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am [lit., behold me!], my son." He said, "Here [is] [lit., behold] the fire and the wood but where [is] the lamb for a burnt offering?"** [Gen. 22:7]

This suggests to us that Isaac does not know all of what is going to transpire. Abraham is the spiritually mature person and it is his decision. Isaac will be given only a moment to make a decision. Abraham has been thinking this over in his mind for several days now and at any point he could have changed his mind. His son is a believer and recognizes the elements of worship as they existed in that day.

**Then Abraham said, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went [the] both of them together.** [Gen. 22:8]

Abraham does not know the mechanics of what will occur yet. He knows that he is to sacrifice his son; he appears to think that Isaac would be resurrected. Abraham does know that God has made many promises to him which could be fulfilled only through his son Isaac; and, at the same time, God had told him to sacrifice Isaac that day. In meshing these two doctrines, Abraham realized that he would return from this mountain with Isaac, although he may not have known exactly what would happen.

**When they came to the place which God had told them, Abraham built there an altar and laid in order the wood and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood.** [Gen. 22:9]

It is at this point when Isaac realizes that he is the sacrifice. Now Abraham is an old man; yet he is able to bind Isaac and then lift him up onto the altar. Therefore, Isaac is still a young boy age 10 or younger. Abraham, therefore, is no older than 110.

Isaac, before being tied, has the ability to bolt now if he so chooses. Abraham could not keep up with him at his age.

It would be marvelous if all this took place when Isaac is 30 or 33, but that does not appear to be the case. The exact place where Isaac is offered could be the later location of Solomon's temple and it could be Golgotha. The place likely did have a significance in the angelic conflict (although we do not know where it was exactly).

In the Hebrew of this verse we have the repetition of the word *and*. This is called a polysyndeton [pronounced POL-y-SYN-de-ton] and in this passage, it indicates great solemnity and deliberation.

**The Abraham put forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son.** [Gen. 22:10]

Here is where we recognize that Abraham did not know how Isaac was to live again and for the promises to be fulfilled through him. He knew that God would somehow cause this to happen and was ready at this point to kill his only son at God's command. For the few psychotics who might be reading this: God is not speaking directly to anyone anymore and child sacrifice is unequivocally forbidden.

**But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Here I [am] [lit., behold me!]." [Gen. 22:11]**

God calls men in this way but seven times: Abraham Abraham; Jacob Jacob (Gen. 46:2); Moses Moses (Ex. 3:4); Samuel Samuel (1Sam. 3:10); Martha Martha (Luke 10:41); Simon, Simon (Luke 12:31); and Saul Saul (Acts 9:4). There is a great emphasis upon the person called or the circumstances at that moment when God calls someone and doubles their name. We also find this used in Ex. 34:6 (Yahweh Yahweh); Matt. 7:21,22 (Lord Lord); Matt. 23:37 (Jerusalem Jerusalem); Mark 15:34 (Eloi Eloi) and even by the disciples in Luke 8:24 (Master Master).

This is not just some arbitrary test which God invented to test Abraham's obedience. God knows that Abraham believes Him and is willing to even sacrifice his only son. Abraham knows that he is capable of this. Therefore, this is not done as some sort of proof to God or to Abraham. Most things which God directs us to do have a two-fold direction: toward man and toward angels. Abraham's obedience and willingness to sacrifice his only son because of God's command is revealed to the angels. Furthermore, the parallel of this action and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son on the cross are striking. This ties the very first book in the Bible to the New Testament. Only the most hard-hearted of man refuses to see the parallel; refuses to see the red thread of our Lord's blood running through the Old and New Testaments.

**Then He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do to him anything because now I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son—your only son—from Me." [Gen. 22:12]**

When God speaks directly to man as He does here, He is speaking to Abraham, to generations to come and to the angels. God stops Abraham from committing an act of child sacrifice because that is outside of God's plan and there are no exceptions. God is omniscient and He knows what is in Abraham's heart. However, God testifies to the angels, who are not omniscient and cannot read the thoughts of man, of Abraham's faith and trust in Him. God speaks to generations to come that Abraham was about to sacrifice his only Son, just as God the Father did on our behalf. There might even be a sense in which God is speaking to Abraham; however, it is dangerous to reach a plateau of spiritual experience and cling to that (I believe that we have an illustration of that in Samuel).

**And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and—behold—a ram behind him caught in a thicket by his horns and Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.** [Gen. 22:13]

God did not even have to instruct Abraham here; Abraham saw the ram and recognized that he was to offer the ram to God instead of his son. Into this act of 4000 years ago, the idea of a substitutionary death is taught to us through what Abraham has done. What Abraham thought originally was that God would raise Isaac from the dead. When they both went up the mountain, he said, "**We** shall return." We further know this from Heb. 11:17–19: **By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; [to Abraham] to whom it was said: "In Isaac your descendants will be called." He determined that God is able to raise [Isaac] from the dead; from which he also received him [Isaac] back as a type.** The writer of Hebrews also properly interprets this chapter from Abraham's life. Isaac is called Abraham's only-begotten Son, just as our Lord is called; Abraham's original thought that God would raise Isaac back from the dead (even though that had not been done by God before).

Isaac is a type of Christ. A type is something which foreshadows the coming of our Lord, or the life or the sacrifice of our Lord. One of the parallels between what has happened here and the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross, a parallel which I have not found anywhere else, is its uniqueness. This is the only time God required a human sacrifice. God did not present an image like this again throughout the remainder of history until this was fulfilled at the end of the gospels in the death of our Lord on the cross. Similarly, our Lord's death was unique—thousands of people have been crucified, many of them believers who were crucified for their stance. However, the death of our Lord was unique, as He took upon Himself the penalty for all of our sins, enduring eternities of hell in a few hours, beyond any pain, suffering and punishment that we could imagine. His death—His life given for ours—is absolutely unique.

**So Abraham called the name of that place *Yahweh-jireh* [Yahweh will provide]; as it is said to this day on the mount of Yahweh—it shall be provided.** [Gen. 22:14]

*Will provide* is actually the Hebrew word *râ'âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*] and it really means *to see*. However, it has a variety of applications as it is not always used in the literal sense. It is variously translated *to advise self, to consider, to perceive, to provide, to regard*, etc. We have a similar usage of the same word. *I will see to that* has nothing to do with physically seeing something or perceiving it; that phrase means that we will perform an action. This refers back to Gen. 22:8 when Isaac asks his father where is the sacrifice and Abraham said, "*God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering.*" They are the exact same Hebrew words as we find in our verse. In the latter portion of this verse, it is found in the Niphal, which is generally the passive stem; it is usually translated *it shall be provided* or *it has been provided*. But it means *has been seen*.

The second sentence indicates that this was written down later by someone other than Abraham. Abraham very likely wrote the portion of Genesis which deals with his life, but it had been copied and possibly edited and there were additions which were made. At which point that it become God's Word, we do not know. My educated guess was that Abraham's first rendition of it was God's Word and when Moses (who likely compiled and edited Genesis) wrote it and added these phrases, it was still God's Word. And as has been mentioned early on Genesis, man had language and man wrote a great deal during and prior to Abraham's time. As we have seen, Abraham was not some slow-thinking nomad with a couple of people traveling with him; but an educated, brilliant man with many abilities and facets, who commanded a group large enough to oppose the armies of four kings (whose armies and kingdoms would seem small by today's standards).

What Abraham did here, in offering up Isaac, foreshadowed Christ's offering on our behalf. This might be best seen in a chart.

<b>The Offering of Isaac Foreshadows the Offering of Jesus Christ</b>	
<b>Isaac</b>	<b>Jesus Christ</b>
Isaac is called Abraham's only son, the son he loves (Gen. 22:2).	Jesus Christ is the Son of God, His beloved Son, His only Son (Matt. 16:16 17:5 Mark 1:1).

<b>The Offering of Isaac Foreshadows the Offering of Jesus Christ</b>	
<b>Isaac</b>	<b>Jesus Christ</b>
Isaac was to be offered as a burnt offering. Burning is always associated with judgment (Gen. 22:2).	Jesus Christ was judged for our sins (Rom. 4:25 5:8, 10).
Isaac went willingly (Gen. 22:3).	Jesus Christ offered Himself willingly (Luke 22:42).
Isaac allowed himself to be bound to the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham was over 100 years old at this time and would not have been stronger than Isaac (Gen. 22:9).	Jesus willingly allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross and crucified, even though He could have destroyed His persecutors there with the word of His mouth (Matt. 26:64 Heb. 1:2–3).
Isaac was bound to the altar, upon the wood (Gen. 22:9).	Jesus Christ was bound to the cross, often called the <i>wood</i> in the New Testament (Acts 5:30 10:39 Peter 2:24 <sup>56</sup> ).
God provided a substitute for Isaac, a ram who had been caught by his horns in a bush nearby (Gen. 22:13).	Jesus Christ dies as a substitute for our sins (Rom. 5:8 1Cor. 5:7).
The place where Abraham was to offer up Isaac is named <i>Jehovah will provide</i> (Gen. 22:14).	Our salvation is completely the provision of God. We do nothing to secure our salvation; we can only believe in order to take that which God has provided for us (Eph. 2:8–9 Titus 3:5).
Great blessing is associated with the offering of Isaac (Gen. 22:17–18).	Great blessing is associated with the offering of Jesus Christ for our sins (Rom. 4:6–8).
The people of all nations would be blessed through Abraham and his offering of Isaac (Gen. 22:18).	The people of all nations are blessed by the offering of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:9 Rev. 19:9 20:6).
Abraham knew that Isaac would rise again from this offering. He told his servant, “ <b>We</b> will return.” (Gen. 22:5).	Jesus Christ did not remain a dead offering; He rose from the dead (Matt. 28).

**And the Angel of Yahweh called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By Myself I have sworn, says Yahweh, because you have done this and have not withheld your son—your only son—indeed, I will bless you and I will multiply your descendants as the stars in the heavens and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." [Gen. 22:15–17]**

There are several points of interest in this passage. One often slips by Bible critics and believers alike. God has promised Abraham that the number of his descendants would be as the *stars in the heavens*. This was very likely written in early in the third millennium (although many critics like to place it much later in history). There are approximately 3000 stars visible to the naked eye. So God is telling Abraham that he'll have 3000 descendants? Not hardly.

The next phrase is one that we have heard before: *your descendants will be like the sand of the sea*. That is very clear to anyone that God has promised Abraham a great many descendants. Our galaxy has approximately 100 billion stars and there are approximately 100 billion galaxies. This gives us  $10^{22}$  number of stars. As Donald DeYoung figured, if every person in the world's 5 billion population got an equal number of stars, we would each

<sup>56</sup> In the KJV, this is rendered *tree* in these references to Jesus Christ; and *wood* elsewhere (1Cor. 3:12 Rev. 18:12).

have 2,000,000,000,000 stars. One writer proceeded to prove that the number of stars and the number of sands of the sea were approximately equal, but to me, that is overkill. The plain point here is that there are an almost uncountable number of stars and almost uncountable number of sand—so shall Abraham's descendants be. Now how did anyone prior to the invention of the modern telescope have any idea that the number of stars in the heavens was uncountable? This is an easy answer: God is speaking; God made all of the stars; He knows how many there are.<sup>57</sup> It is plain that in some revelation, he has indicated to Abraham and to others that the number of stars in the heavens is almost uncountable.

Furthermore, Abraham has gotten himself a few enemies, and the Jews, being God's people, will have a great many enemies: primarily those who are in their land. God promises that they will conquer the land in this passage. The gates of the cities are the openings of the fortified cities and the Jews will control those gates, meaning that they will eventually control that land. God is making this promise to Abraham when he finally has but one son through whom these promises will be fulfilled. The way gate is used here is called a synecdoche [pronounced *syn-EHK-do-kee*] where a part of something stands for the whole; here the gates of the city stand for the entire city. The Jews would not only possess the gates of the cities, but they will possess the entire city.

When God makes an oath, He can swear by nothing higher than by Himself (Heb. 6:13). This is one of the many passages which indicates that God is the Angel of Yahweh. The Angel is not relaying a message from God, but the Angel of Yahweh is Yahweh. He is so called because there are three persons in the trinity and this subtly indicates that fact. Such a revelation is more clearly stated in Isa. 44:6 and 48:16. God did not have a mouse in His pocket when He said, in Gen. 1:26a: "[Let Us make man in Our image.](#)"

The oath that God is making is again the Abrahamic covenant. We have heard it several times and since it is all within several chapters, it seems as though every few minutes God is promising to bless his descendants through him. However, there is a time factor involved here which is not as readily apparent. Furthermore, God is not above repeating Himself when the situation warrants it.

Abrahamic Covenant Passage		Approximate Year	Abraham's Age
Gen. 12:1–4	Abram leaves Haran	2086 B.C.	75
Gen. 12:7	Abram in Shechem	2081 B.C.	76*
Gen. 13:14–18	Abram and Lot split	2080 B.C.	81*
Gen. 15:1–21	Abram after Melchizedek	2077 B.C.	84*
Gen. 17:1–19	Abram becomes Abraham; Isaac promised	2062 B.C.	99
Gen. 18:10–15	Isaac promised to Sarah	2062 B.C.	99
Gen. 21:1–4, 12	Isaac is born	2061 B.C.	100
Gen. 22:15–18	Isaac is offered	2046 B.C.	115*

All the dates are very rough approximations and all starred (\*) ages are derived, but not necessarily accurate. Such ages are provided for you to hang a hat on.

What has occurred is both progressive revelation (although, as we have seen, some things could have been derived; e.g., that Abraham's seed would come through Sarah) and reaffirmation of the covenant. All of this took place over the span of approximately 40 years. Throughout that time, Abraham placed more and more faith upon God and God's Word.

<sup>57</sup> Psalm 147:4 reads: [He \[God\] counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.](#) Also read Isa. 40:26



**"...and all the nations of the earth bless themselves [and be blessed] by your descendants [lit., Seed] because you have obeyed my voice." [Gen. 22:18]**

God has promised that the nations of the earth would bless themselves through Abraham's descendants. The reflexive voice means that through their positive volition toward God's plan and provision as revealed by His people. Unbelievers bless themselves through their interaction with us. We give them the gospel and they believe, thereby blessings themselves.

*To be blessed* is in the Hithpael stem, which is usually the intensive reflexive stem. The Hithpael is used in the following ways: (1) Its primary use is reflexive—the verb describes action on or for oneself. That is, the subject of the verb is also the object of the verb. However, this does not completely convey the reflexive use, as there are examples where the verb takes on another object. These verbs are known as tolerative—the subject allows an action to affect himself or herself. (2) Reciprocal use: Occasionally, the Hithpael denotes reciprocity; that is, *they worked with one another, they looked at one another*. (3) The third use is known as iterative, which means that the Hithpael suggests repeated activity (*he walked about, he walked to and fro, and turned back and forth*). (4) The fourth use is known as estimative: the verb indicates how one shows himself or regards himself, whether in truth or by pretense (*he pretended to be sick, they professed to be Jews*).<sup>58</sup> (5) This can occasionally be understood to be more of a passive than a reflexive (Gen. 22:18, for instance).<sup>59</sup>

Now let's apply these uses to our text:

### Hithpael Usage in "All the Nations of the Earth will be Blessed by your Seed."

1. The intensive aspect means, this is more than simply being blessed with nice cars and a 60" plasma TV. The intensive stem indicates that Gentiles are eternally blessed by Abraham's Seed (which Seed is Jesus Christ).
2. The Hithpael is generally understood to be an intensive reflexive, which means a person acts upon himself in the action of the verb. The idea here is, a person believes in Jesus Christ and, by doing this, brings eternal blessing upon himself.
3. The Hithpael is also used, on occasion, in the passive sense. *We receive* the blessing of God through the Seed of Abraham. However, the simple passive Niphal stem is not used here, because the blessings from God are intensive.
4. Finally, the Hithpael is used in the iterative sense, which means that there is a repetition of the activity. Here, people are blessed again and again and again—individually as believers in Jesus Christ, and collectively as one individual at a time believing in Jesus Christ.

As you can see, there is a wealth of information conveyed by the use of the Hithpael in this context.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Note the blessings which God has promised Abraham in the past two verses:

### God's Promised Blessings to Abraham

- God will bless Abraham in general (the specifics are given in these verses (Gen. 22:17a).
- God will multiply Abraham's seed as the stars of the heavens and the sands which are on the sea shore (Gen. 22:17b).
- God will see that Abraham's descendants possess the gate of their enemies (Gen. 22:17c).
- The rest of the nations on earth will be blessed by association with Abraham's descendants (Gen. 22:18a).

<sup>58</sup> Choon-Leong Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew (Revised Edition)*; Abingdon Press, Nashville; ©1995, pp. 298–299.

<sup>59</sup> See also *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2275.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**So Abraham returned to his young men and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.** [Gen. 22:19]

The word used for *young men* here is the same one used of Isaac in v. 5; Isaac was probably between 8 and 10 here. These young men are possibly in their teens or early 20's.

In the rest of chapter 22, we go off onto another topic entirely:

**And it was now after these things that it was told to Abraham saying, "Note, Milcah has also borne children to Nahor, your brother. Uz, his first-born, Buz, his brother, Kemuel, the father of Aram."** [Gen. 22:20–21]

This verse clearly tells us who the original author of these chapters of Genesis is: Abraham. Otherwise, it would make no sense to inform us that *Abraham was told* that his brother had children. This is the author telling us how he came to know these things. If the author was Moses, he would have simply stated that Nahor also had children and they were Uz, Buz and Kemueal.

There are three Uz's in the Bible, being found in Gen. 10:22–23, Gen. 22:21 and Gen. 36:28. It is likely the first Uz after whom the land of Uz was named in the book of Job. Aram, here, is probably not the father of the Aramæans; that Aram would be found in Gen. 10.

**"and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel."** [Gen. 22:22]

Bethuel is worth mentioning, as he is the father of Rebekah and Laban (Gen. 22:23 25:20). Rebekah will become her cousin Isaac's wife (Gen. 25:20). The others are not mentioned again in Scripture (with one minor exception). However, since Abraham is the human author of this portion of God's Word, these people are important to him so he lists them; God the Holy Spirit allows for this.

**And Bethuel sired Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight to Nahor, Abraham's brother. Furthermore, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.** [Gen. 22:23–24]

Another list of people most of whose names are not mentioned beyond this passage and you should be wondering why would God the Holy Spirit fill up a couple verses with names of unimportant people? In points:

### Why Nahor's Children are Listed in Scripture

- 1) It was a blessing to have children in the ancient world; many children.
- 2) The fact that Sarah was unable for decades to provide Abraham with a child was a real problem for Abraham.
- 3) It was common for a man to sire children through a mistress, concubine and/or slave girl.
- 4) As we have seen, this is not God's plan and it caused Abraham a great deal of difficulty.
- 5) Whereas, by human viewpoint, it looks as though Nahor got the best of the deal, having many children, nowhere in recent history do we read about the Nahorites or about any of his descendants (with one exception).
- 6) Rebekah is mentioned many times because she marries Isaac and is moved into the line of Christ.
- 7) Human viewpoint would indicate that Nahor was the most blessed.
- 8) Divine viewpoint and human retrospection reveals that God blessed Abraham infinitely more times than

## Why Nahor's Children are Listed in Scripture

He did Nahor.

- 9) We should depend upon God and not upon man for our blessing; we should evaluate our life from the standpoint of divine viewpoint not on the basis of contemporary human opinion. These human opinions may seem important, but they are transitory and unimportant.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Most of Reumah's children probably settled north of Damascus and one of my sources names them as the ancestors of the Aramæan tribes. I don't know that to be true. Tebah is mentioned again; his tribe are named in 1Chron. 18:8 and 2Sam. 8:8. Maacah was a popular name, and, like Chris, could be a male or female's name. This Maacah did have progeny who later did have a small name made for themselves. They are mentioned in 2Sam. 10:6, 8 and Josh. 13:13. They did occupy the land and were never driven out of the land by the Israelites. They received their blessing by association with Israel. In short, Abraham's one son has progeny who are still racially distinguishable today; Nahob's children, at best, had a couple of cities sprout from them and, several generations later, would have been forgotten had it not been for the pages of Scripture.

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

**Genesis 23** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 23

### Genesis 23:1–20

**Introduction:** Chapter 23 deals with the death and burial of Sarah. This is another strong argument in favor of Abrahamic authorship. Someone writing this down years from now would be content to write down that Sarah died at such an age and be done with it in two or three verses. The man who has spend likely a century with her would have a great deal to say concerning her death.

**And the life of Sarah was 127 years—the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba—that is, Hebron—in the land of Canaan. And Abraham went to [or, proceeded to] mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.** [Gen. 23:1–2]

In chapter 22, Abraham was approximately 115 years old and he was 9 years older than Sarah. This would make him 136 years old, so over 20 years have passed between these two chapters. Abraham lived a long time and we only touch on the spiritual high and low points in his life and on the things which touched him.

Hebron was not actually built as Hebron until Num. 13:22; but that does not mean that the land had not been occupied prior to that time.

Abraham wrote this, and likely Moses, a great student of history and geography, added the information that this was now Hebron. It would be likely that Abraham wrote this portion of Scripture and that it was Moses and not an intervening person who copied it, adding brief bits of geographical information. Hebron is 25 miles S-SW of Jerusalem, having been rebuilt around 1728 B.C. (as per Numbers), but archeology has shown it to be consistently occupied back as far as 3300 B.C.

**And Abraham rose up from before his dead and spoke to the Hittites [the sons of Heth], saying, "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burying place among you tht I may bury my dead out of my sight."** [Gen. 23:3–4]

Abraham, at this point, does not really own any land, but only lives by permission of the folks in the land of Canaan. As we have observed, Abraham has quite a good relationship with most of the people of the land.

God has given the land to his progeny. Abraham is not arrogant; he makes a reasonable request for a burial plot, since this would be a permanent dwelling place for Sarah now. He is choosing for this place to be a distance from him; out of his sight. He does not use the common expressions of entreaty, but uses the imperative mood instead, which is a sign of great grief and a natural preoccupation with his loss.

Part of the translation of v. 3 has been left out. Every language has its idioms and Hebrew has an abundance of them. The plural of the word face is found here (it is almost always in the plural) and it would have been more accurate to translate this: *and Abraham arose from before the faces of his dead.* Face is always in the plural in this type of usage because it refers to the various features of the face (in English, pants is always in the plural) and this is not unlike the Greek word προσ, which means *face to face with*. Here is one of the many places where a strictly literal translation does not improve the understanding of the meaning of the passage.

**The Hittites answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my Lord, a mighty prince [or, a prince of God]: you are among us in the choicest of our sepulchers. Bury your dead. None of us will withhold his sepulcher from you; from burying your dead." [Gen. 23:6–7]**

During this period of occupation, Abraham had a generally very good relationship with those around him. Some may have even recognized the blessing by association which was involved with living in the same geographical area as he did. What is being said is that he can have any of the privately own burial places from any of the Hittites who are there. This reveals a great deal of respect for Abraham. There would be associated with this a great deal of blessing by association. *Prince of God* is said to be idiomatic for a *mighty prince*, but I do not believe that to be true. I believe that Abraham's testimony was such that the Hittite businessmen recognized and respected his relationship to the living God. Many of these Hittites were likely saved and will spend eternity in heaven because of Abraham.

The Hittites were the descendants of Heth, Canaan's son, and one of the seven tribes which proceeded from Canaan. The relationship that we see here with Abraham is far different than what we will see later. God commanded the Jews to completely annihilate the Hittites, yet they did not do so (Deut. 7:1, 2, 24 Judges 3:5). They occupied this area of the land of Canaan, later known as Hebron (Deut. 7:1 1Kings 10:29). There were honorable Hittites found in Scripture, besides this passage. Ahimelech and Uriah are found in 1Sam. 26:6 and in 2Sam. 11:6, 21. However, in general, the Hittites were a powerful, warlike people.

Archeologists and historians have questioned whether there were Hittites in Palestine during this time because (1) the Hittite kingdom was in Asia Minor (now Turkey); (2) the Hittites did not rise to power until 400 years after this passage. However, we find them here and later in Num. 13:29 when Joshua and 11 other spies discover that there are Hittite settlements in this same area. However, it is very possible that the influence of the Hittites had extended to Palestine. For instance, archeologists have discovered a nonaggression pact signed by the Hittite New Kingdom and by Egypt with the treaty line drawn in such a way to put Palestine under Egyptian influence. This was much later in Hittite history—in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.; but it shows that there was Hittite interest in Palestine. Earlier than this we have discovered cuneiform mercantile tablets in Cappadocia left by early Assyrian merchants, dating between 1950–1850 B.C. This would indicate trade between the Hittites and the Assyrians.

It is possible that these Hittites are not related to the famous Hittites that we find as a superpower ruling what is now Turkey during the time of King David. It is possible that these are the Hattis—or, possibly the ones who conquered the Hattis and adopted the name for themselves. This would have occurred between 2300–2000 B.C. and in the original Hebrew, Hatti and Hittite would have been spelled exactly the same as there were no vowels used in the original manuscripts. The vowels have been supplied by the oral tradition. If this is the case, then it is likely that it is this group which is found through Genesis during the time of the patriarchs.

However, it is not difficult to believe that these were the original Hittites; that they were pushed north by the Hebrews (although some were left in the land) and that they regrouped and formed a powerful kingdom north of Israel. We are lacking archeological evidence to substantiate this; but, a half century or so ago, we lacked archeological evidence for the Hittites as a world power anyway. As an investigative science, archeology is not finished. We have put but a small dent in the remaining archeological information for ancient history.

**And he spoke to them, saying, "If you are willing [lit., if it is your soul] that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he owns. It is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me for the full price in your presence as a possession for a burying place." [Gen. 23:7–9]**

We do not know at what time that the *History of God and man* was committed to *paper*. Ancient men were obviously healthier—given that they lived for hundreds of years—and it is likelier that they had a greater capacity for memory. In this transaction, it is not clear if any “papers are filed” but the witnessing of the other Hittites appears to be fundamental to this transaction. Let me postulate that what was required for a transaction like this was a dozen or so men to sit in on the proceedings, and they kept track of the land sale which occurs here. If that

is the case, then it is reasonable for *The History of God and Man* to be committed to memory for many generations.

At some point, perhaps during the time of Moses, this was committed to writing—and Moses was clearly an educated man with the ability to write these things down. Furthermore, God tells him to write stuff down throughout the 4 books of Moses.

How the *History of God and Man* came to Moses is unknown—was it from the Jews in Egypt? Did it come from his father-in-law? We don't know—however, given that chapters like this are recorded in all of their minute detail suggests that Moses only functioned as an editor to this degree: he knew geography, and he updated some geographical references (which updating, we call a **gloss**).

Over the past several decades, we have unearthed an abundant amount of written material predating Abraham by hundreds of years—the Code of Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.), who lived within 250 years of the life of Abraham; we have stele's from that general era and before. Furthermore, Abraham hailed from the city of Ur, which was a very literate culture even during the times of Abraham.<sup>60</sup> So there is nothing which prevents the memories of Abraham from being preserved, either by writing or by memory.

Since Abraham came from a very civilized area and was obviously a learned man, the most likely chain of events was that he merely added to the Scriptures which had already been written down.

In any case, it ought to be clear that this attention to detail could only be that of a grieving husband.

The word *soul* refers to the *will* or *desire* of those Hittites present; specifically Ephron. This is called a metonymy and it has been covered previously.

Note that Abraham was not asking for a free ride. He was willing to pay the market value for the plot of land that he requested. Ephron was there and he responded:

**Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites and answered,—Ephron the Hittite, to Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites of all who went in at the gate of his city—saying, "So my lord, hear me: the field I give you and the cave that is in it I give you in the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you; bury your dead." [Gen. 23:10–11]**

This is a very formal and sympathetic proceeding. What is done is certainly done within the laws of that time. Obviously, transactions of this type were made legal by the witness of several other disinterested (i.e., neutral third-) parties. Ephron was magnanimous enough to give Abraham this plot of land without strings and without cost.

**Then Abraham bowed before the people of the land and he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "But if you will hear me, I will give the price of the field; accept from me that I may bury my dead there." [Gen. 23:12–13]**

What is revealed here is friendship and mutual respect. Abraham desires to pay the full price of the field and the owner desires to give the field to Abraham without charge. In v. 11, Ephron has told Abraham that *I have given you the field*; perfect tense, referring to a completed past action. However, this action has not yet occurred. This is called heterosis [pronounced *het'-e-rō'-sis*] where a future action is considered so certain that it is referred to with the certainty of a past event. The same use of the perfect tense is also found in v. 13 where Abram states *I have give you the price of the field*.

**Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me: a piece of land 400 sheckels of silver; what is that between you and me? Bury your dead." [Gen. 23:14–15]**

<sup>60</sup> From [http://www.truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/4\\_How\\_was\\_Bible\\_written/](http://www.truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/4_How_was_Bible_written/) accessed December 4, 2014.

As far as we know, there were no coins prior to 700 B.C. and the Hebrews did not use coins until approximately 500 B.C. Had the OT been written during those times (which is what is alleged by liberal *scholars*) then coinage would have been quoted here. However, during this time, financial transactions were accomplished using several mediums, including precious metals (value determined by weight and demand), as well as cattle, grain and spices. It is very difficult to determine the amount of money in today's dollars that we are dealing with, but a reasonable guess would be \$300-800 in 1995 American dollars. Recall that we are dealing with a very small and dispersed population during those days; land would be very inexpensive; and that Abraham and these Hittites are likely all very wealthy, successful businessmen, the equivalent of millionaires today (they likely did not have men who were equivalent to our billionaires today or even 100-millionaires).

One of the many Jewish stereotypes perpetuated today is their alleged parsimonious nature. Whether or not this is statistically true, this was certainly not a trait of their father Abraham. Abraham began bargaining from the set price of the land and the owner of the land began bargaining from zero. This is a clear deviation from that stereotype. What we have here is a couple of millionaires (or, at least, very wealthy businessmen) and the owner of the property is telling Abraham that there is not enough money involved here to even be an issue. This is not exactly what is occurring here, but it is close. It is actually a very polite way of bargaining and it is done in front of witnesses. What we are seeing is a business transaction which took place 2000 years prior to the incarnation of our Lord between businessmen who had mutual respect for one another. It is a far cry from today and stock transactions, buyouts, and the selling of companies as though they were so much scrap, etc. This reveals a system of honor almost nonexistent today.

**Abraham agreed with Ephron and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: 400 shekels of silver according to the weights current among the merchants. So the field of Ephron in Machpelah which was to the east of Mamre was deeded over. The field with the cave which was in it and all the trees that were in the field through the whole area round about [sold] to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites before all who went in at the gate of his city. [Gen. 23:16–18]**

There are no closed doors in this transaction, no written contracts, no secrecy. What is being sold is agreed to in front of a large group of businessmen, the amount that it is sold for is spoken aloud and the actual transaction is observed by all of these businessmen.

The verb in v. 17 is *qûwm* (קום) [pronounced *koom*] and its basic meanings are *to stand, to arise*. However, the land is not standing nor is it arising in this verse. This verb is found no less than 400 times in the Old Testament in the Qal stem alone. Obviously, it has wide application depending upon the context. In this context, we are dealing with the purchase of property where the amount paid for the property and the actual property itself are agreed to. It could be reasonably translated *established* or *confirmed* or *to fix (with respect to price and terms)* but the NASB conveys the concept in the clearest sense for us when it translates this word *deeded over*. This gives a contemporary understanding of the word without doing a serious disservice to the meaning.

**After this, Abraham buried Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. The field and the cave were deeded over to Abraham by the Hittites as a possession for a burying place. [Gen. 23:19–20]**

What is found throughout most of this chapter, but not always in my translation, are a preponderance of *and*'s. This continued use of *and*, as has been pointed out previously, is someone who is going through the motions under great stress or great solemnity. It is very perfunctory and deliberate.

A final note—this is exactly the kind of chapter that we would expect from the grieving husband at the loss of his wife. The details are recalled in the way that a man would recall such details and this is the way a man often grieves and remembers. It is a few days out of Abraham's life which affect him profoundly, yet he holds to these details. This is not something which would have been passed down in verse or in a song or by oral tradition. This is what Abraham would remember, maybe several years later, these incidents in all their minutiae. I have no idea how scholar after scholar can study this book of Genesis and not conclude that portions like this could come from

nowhere else but the hand of Abraham. Certainly it was possibly edited with some additions inserted to help the reader better identify the geographical locations, but by and large this is Abraham recording this information.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---



**Genesis 24** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 24

### Genesis 24:1–67

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Bârak<sup>e</sup>  
The Servant is a Type of Christ

**Introduction:** Chapter 24 deals primarily Isaac and Rebekah. At some point in time, somewhere between Gen. 24:1 and 25:7, the authorship of Genesis changed hands once again. Isaac during this time will take up the pen (only an expression, mind you) and continue where his father Abraham left off).

**Now Abraham was old , well advance in years, and Yahweh had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household who had charge of all, "Put your hand under my thigh and I will make you swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and of the earth that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell (in their midst). [Gen. 24:1–3]**

Abraham is about 139 years old at this time (cp Gen. 17:21, 24 and 25:20). Again, the Bible gives us a safe age at which to refer to someone as old. Abraham recognizes a need to maintain some sort of religious separation. Abraham does not have a direct command from God in this regard, but it is obvious that he intends to find a woman for Isaac who believes in the living God. The Canaanites would be heathen and some (not all) would be worshipping all manner of false gods and deities.

We have had the word *to bless* (bârak<sup>e</sup>) throughout the book of Genesis and it may be a good idea to know exactly what it means and how it is used. For this, you may go to the Doctrine of Bârak<sup>e</sup> ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

This is the abbreviated doctrine of bârak<sup>e</sup>.

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Bârak<sup>e</sup>

1. Some general comments:
  - a. The spelling and pronunciation: bârak<sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced *baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup>*].
  - b. Strong's #1288 BDB #138.
  - c. First of all, the basic meaning of bârak<sup>e</sup> is *to kneel before; to bless*.
  - d. The use of bârak<sup>e</sup> seems to be, in one sense, an indication that one believes in Jesus Christ. It is as if the person is saying, *I am a believer in Jesus Christ*; but, in the Old Testament, this would mean *I am a believer in Jehovah Elohim, the God of the Jews*. And in the time of Abraham, this would be having faith in the Revealed God, the God of Abraham. The person is expressing praise and adoration toward God, or he is asking for God to bless the one to whom he is speaking, but the implication appears to be that this person is a believer in Jehovah Elohim, and therefore, in a sense, making a public declaration of faith.
2. Qal (common) Stem:
  - a. *To bend to knee; to bless*
  - b. When addressed toward God, *to celebrate, to praise, to adore; to bend the knee to* (Gen. 9:26).
    - i. This is found in the Qal passive participle, used in this way because God has answered prayer

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Bârak<sup>e</sup>

(Gen. 24:27).

- c. The Qal passive participle is used in the phrase *blessed of Jehovah* (in Gen. 24:31) to indicate that a person is a believer in Jehovah Elohim, witnessed to because Jehovah has blessed him. At the very least, this may be understood that Jehovah has blessed him with salvation.
- d. We find the Qal passive participle used with God blessing man, we understand this to mean *to bless, to be made prosperous, to be made to have many children*. Gen. 26:29.
- e. The use of the word bârak<sup>e</sup> could indicate that a person was a believer in Jehovah Elohim. Ex. 18:10–13.
- f. When God is the object of this verb, then man is praising or celebrating Him.

### 3. Piel (intensive) Stem:

- a. *To bless* [in the sense of giving creatures the ability and the desire to procreate in abundance] (Gen. 1:22, 28 22:17).
- b. *To bless* [in the sense of man using all his God-given resources to subdue the earth; more generally, to make grand use of God's provisions] (Gen. 1:28).
- c. *To make abundant, to make prosperous*, (both from Gesenius); and let me suggest *to provide for in great abundance* (Gen. 1:28 5:2 17:20 22:17 24:1, 31, 35 25:11).
- d. *To celebrate* [i.e., the Sabbath] (Gen. 2:3).
- e. *To bless; to treat with respect; to give due deference* (Gen. 12:3 with reference to Gentiles blessing Jews). This set of meanings can be reasonably derived from the fundamental meaning *to bend the knee to*; and to extrapolate from this, Gentiles relating to Jews in the sense of blessing them.
- f. The Piel is used of man blessing God in the sense that it means *to celebrate, to praise, to adore; to bend the knee to* (Gen. 24:48).
- g. One person blessing another person means *to wish a person blessing, happiness, prosperity, and children*. See Gen. 24:60. 27:23 however, there is more to this word than one person asking nice things to happen to another. Gen. 27 contains a story about Isaac blessing Jacob (who pretended to be Esau in order to get this blessing). That deceit would be used to get blessing, indicates that Jacob receiving the blessing of Isaac is quite important. Gen. 27:1–29. So, there is more to this than simply *to bless; to wish for blessings for someone; to ask God to give special blessings and abundance to another*. This story seems to carry with it some sort of exclusivity as well as the expectation of blessing being bestowed. *To invoke or enjoin God for blessings [prosperity, happiness] for another*.
- h. Bârak<sup>e</sup> is used as a greeting and as a goodbye. Ruth 2:4 Gen. 47:10
- i. There are problem verses: 1Kings 21:10, 13 Job 1:5, 11 2:5 Psalm 10:3 where bârak<sup>e</sup> (found in the Piel) is translated by some as *curse*. Others suggest that the common meanings may be applied. Since this word is used in a farewell (Gen. 47:7, 10; and how many people, when they say good bye to you, say, "God bless"), it is suggested that it means *to bid farewell to, to greet*. Barnes makes this suggestion, affirming that bârak<sup>e</sup> may be rendered *to curse: Perhaps the best explanation of the bad sense of the original word is to be found in the practice of blessing by way of salutation, not only on meeting, but also on taking leave (Gen. 47:7, 10). From the latter custom the word came to mean "bidding farewell to," and so "renouncing," "casting off," "cursing."*<sup>1</sup> In the verses named, it is quite difficult to render bârak<sup>e</sup> to mean *bless* when it clearly appears to mean *curse, blaspheme* in 1Kings 21:10, 13.

### 4. Niphal (passive) Stem:

- a. *To be blessed, to receive blessing; to be made prosperous; to be made abundant* (Gen. 12:2).

### 5. Hithpael (intensive reflexive; reflexive of the Piel) Stem:

- a. *To be blessed, to receive blessing; to be made prosperous; to be made abundant*. Gen. 26:4, 12.

### 6. The Pual uses are not found in the book of Genesis. The Pual is the passive stem of the Piel, making it the passive, intensive stem.

- a. *To receive blessing; to receive divine favor; to be given prosperity and/or abundance*. See Num. 22:6.

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Bârak<sup>e</sup>

- b. This also appears to refer to *blessing, prosperity and abundance from God*. Deut. 33:13.
  - i. This can be used of God by man, and therefore, it means God should *receive the bowing of the knees, the worship, and the obeisance* from man. Job 1:21.

<sup>1</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 1Kings 21:10.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**"But you will go to my country and to my relatives and take a wife for my son, Isaac."** [Gen. 24:4]

What appears to be a call for racial purity here (and particularly much later in Israel's history) is not for racial reasons but for reasons of faith. There is only one true God and He will reveal Himself to anyone who desires to know Him. It does not matter how sincere a worshiping heathen happens to be or to how much thought they have put into their religion. Most religions have a god made in the image of man or after the views and prejudices of man. This god is a legalistic god who saves and blesses only on the basis of human works. Abraham recognizes the kind of havoc which can be created in Isaac's life if he marries someone who does not worship the living and true God.

The exact same thing is taught to Christians in the epistles of Paul: do not become unequally yoked. You cannot make a worse mistake than to marry an unbeliever, if you are a believer; or to marry a believer who has no interest in God's Word if you have an insatiable appetite for God's Word. If you find yourself in that position, about to get married, then Paul's advice is to remain just as you are, unmarried, for awhile. A year or two (or 10 or 20) of waiting is nothing compared to 10-30 years of misery; or, worse yet, the bearing of children and divorce. The United States has become a nation which takes the vows of permanence in marriage lightly and we are paying the piper with our youth being out of control, greedy and misdirected. Abraham wisely understands the importance of finding a wife for Isaac who believes in God.

**The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow after me to this land; must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?"** [Gen. 25:5]

This is a bright and prepared servant. He is not questioning Abraham's orders nor is he attempting to supercede Abraham's authority; he is simply asking about plan B (if the woman does not come with him, should he then take Isaac to the woman) or should he modify plan A instead: take Isaac with him in the first place. My guess is, the servant has logically come to this conclusion that, when he goes to some foreign land and asks a woman to come back and marry his master's son—he could see the average woman balking at this. "You did not even bring me a picture of him on your iPhone?" she would say. To the servant, he expect that they will have to go to plan B. This being a very long trip with a lot of valuables, this is not a trip the servant wants to make several times.

**The Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. Yahweh, God of heavens,<sup>61</sup> Who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth and Who spoke to me and swore to me, saying 'I will give to your descendants this land.' He will send His angel before you and you will take a wife for my son from there."** [Gen. 25:6–7]

Abraham has thought this out. He knows that he must find a wife for Isaac from his same stock; one who believes in the living God; and Abraham trusts God to have this wife there waiting for Isaac. Isaac is about 39 years old now. One concern that I believe that Abraham has is that Isaac will go back to Abraham's family and remain there. God has given this land to the descendants of Abraham, therefore, Abraham and his descendants must remain in the land.

<sup>61</sup> *The Emphasized Bible* adds: **and God of the earth**

**"But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there."** [Gen. 24:8]

So the servant will take an oath to go back to Abraham's relatives, whom the servant probably has never seen and whom Abraham has not seen for almost a century. Abraham does not want the servant to just pick up some young waif from anywhere and bring her back, claiming to be from the same family. Abraham does not expect this, but he has his servant take an oath to indicate how important this is.

**So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. Then the servant took ten camels from his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master in his hand and he arose and went to Mesopotamia [lit., Aram of the two rivers] to the city of Nahor.** [Gen. 24:9–10]

Generally speaking, the camel was not widely used until around 1200 B.C. In fact, as of my last reading on the subject, there is no archeological evidence that camels were domesticated prior to that date. However, this does not preclude isolated incidents and small groups of people from domesticating and using camels. Abraham was a brilliant man who traveled throughout the promised land. If anyone would have had the inspiration and opportunity to acquire and domesticate camels, it would be him.

When going to procure a wife for Isaac, the servant needs to show the perspective in-laws that Isaac comes from a very successful family. It was customary to bring great gifts in those days on such a venture. Abraham already knows something about Nahor's family, as we have seen in Gen. 22:20–24. He knows that Nahor has several sons and they all have families. Note there is a possible age difference. Isaac is Abraham's son, albeit, born to him at a late age, and Rebekah's father is likely Nahor's youngest son (Rebekah is Isaac's right woman). Nahor had been established long enough and blessed by association with Abraham (by being related to him) that a city was named for him and he apparently ruled over a small tribe or at least was a patriarch for this small tribe of people.

**And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening during the time when women go out to draw water. And he said, "O, Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, I pray that you grant me great success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham."** [Gen. 24:11–12]

Although men have called upon the name of God prior to this, this is possibly the first spoken prayer recorded in Scripture (or one of the first). What is marvelous is that this is a prayer of a servant, an unnamed servant, who, even after taking an oath, has no idea as to how important this mission is. Possibly only Abraham begins to understand the importance of find Isaac's right woman among Nahor's family.

His prayer is a testimony to Abraham and his faith; it is because of Abraham's faith that this servant believes in God and prays to the living God. Contrast this to Lot who escapes Sodom with only his two daughters—no one else believed in his God.

Furthermore, note that Abraham does not send his servant to Lot and his two daughters to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham knows the degeneracy that Lot and family were exposed to and influenced by.

This servant even recognizes some of the attributes of God; his prayer is in the imperative mood. For some people, praying in the imperative mood is arrogance; for a small few, praying in the imperative mood shows great spiritual growth and understanding of God's plan.

This test that the servant will perform to determine the suitability of a woman's character is repeated three times because of its importance.

**"See, I am standing by the spring of water and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. And it will be to the maiden to whom I shall say to her, 'Please let down your**

**jar that I may drink,' and she will say 'Drink and also I will water your camels.' Let her be the one that You have appointed for our servant Isaac and by this [or, by her] I will know that You have shown steadfast love to my master." [Gen. 24:13–14]**

The servant is still praying. He does not know anyone in this area and it would be poor manners to go to the spring well which Nahor had dug and to drink without permission. The servant has manners and understands protocol. Twice a day, the women of a village would go to draw water for cooking and washing. His *pickup line* will be to ask a maiden for a drink of water. He is looking for her to offer to water his camels. Why? Because that will immediately show that she is thoughtful, observant, polite and considerate. A woman who is not too bright might not think to offer his camels water; a woman who is self-centered and not polite or considerate, would not bother to make such an offer. Furthermore, such a woman would understand the value of property; which will be important if she marries Isaac, the heir of all that Abraham has. This is a bright servant and he knows what to look for in a woman. He will certainly pick out a woman whom he finds attractive, but he will expect more than that from her.

God cannot help but answer such a prayer and God is glorified when He can answer our prayers. People neglect praying, either due to lack of faith, lack of time or through their confusion about God's omniscience. We are here to glorify God; when we pray and our prayers are answered, this glorifies our Father. He desires to answer our prayers. We are foolish not to take advantage of this.

**Application:** Bear in mind that this all takes place during the time of Abraham, before God has revealed all His Word. Therefore, prayers and man's interaction with God was different. We have more information about God and His character and His plan; therefore, we realize that we do not necessarily call the shots about when we meet our right person.

**And it came to pass that before he had finished speaking, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah the wife of Nahor Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. The maiden was very fair to look upon; a virgin whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. [Gen. 24:15–16]**

At this point, we are not told whether Abraham's servant was speaking aloud, speaking quietly or mentally to God. However, God answered his prayer immediately. Isa. 65:24 reads: *It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.* We are told later that the servant prayed in his heart to Yahweh (Gen. 24:45).

Even though the Bible has clearly identified her as Isaac's second cousin already, her relation to him is reiterated.

The servant appears to be wrapped up in his concentration in praying to God and he does not see her at first as he is praying. She comes down, gets some water, and begins to leave. This is when he suddenly notices her and calls out.

**The servant then ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." [Gen. 24:17]**

Notice that she has already dipped into the well and has gotten her water and is walking away. She is too far away for the servant to just yell and say "Can I have some water from the well?" That would just defeat his purpose of meeting Rebekah in the first place because she would just call out to him, "Sure." Jacob will meet his wife at a well (possibly this one and Moses met his wife at a well in Ex. 2:15–21).

**She said, "Drink, my lord" she hastened and she let her jar down upon her head and gave him a drink. When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "Also for your camels I will draw [water] until they have finished drinking." [Gen. 24:18–19]**

The servant could not have asked for anything more. He prayed to God for a woman who would be a suitable candidate for marriage for his master's son; he asked for the sign that she offer him water for his camels. She did, indicating, as mentioned before, indicating her thoughtfulness, manners and lack of self-centeredness.

**So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw [more water]. And she drew [water] for all his camels. [Gen. 24:20]**

So that the animals did not muddy up the area around the well and so that they did not slop the water around back into the well, the trough was put a distance from the well. This is simply good hygiene. Rebekah immediately does what she can for his camels because she is a woman who has been taught manners and consideration for others.

**The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether Yahweh had prospered his journey or not. [Gen. 24:21]**

**And it came to pass when the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring [weighing] a half shekel and two gold bracelets for her arms, weighing ten shekels and said, "Whose daughter are you; tell me. Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in?" [Gen. 24:22–23]**

This strikes me as being fairly expensive, this amount in jewelry for the time that she spent watering their camels. This reveals that the servant is not a man who is poor or that he does not work for a man who is poor.

**She said to him, "I am the daughter of Betheul, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." She then said to him, "[There is] both enough straw and provender [feed] with us and [there is] room to lodge in." [Gen. 24:24–25]**

It is amazing how more civilized and trusting the old, *less civilized* world was. It would not occur to us to bring in a stranger off the street; let alone several strangers. Our life has become so degenerate in these United States that such behavior would be unsafe. However, it does not occur to Rebekah to act in any other way. She identifies herself and indicates that there is room for them at her father's home (obviously, she will need his permission).

**The man bowed his head and worshiped Yahweh and said, "Blessed by Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham Who has not forsaken His steadfast love and His faithfulness toward my master. As for me, Yahweh has led me in the way to the house of the kinsmen of my master." [Gen. 24:26–27]**

Abraham's servant openly worships Y<sup>e</sup>howah and recognizes that He has led him to exactly where he is supposed to be. She has identified herself as a relative of Abraham's (Abraham already knew the names of his own neices and nephews in Gen. 22:20–24). The servant also knew their names and knew who it was who he was looking for (he did not know which female in particular, he just was looking for a woman who was in Abraham's family).

**Then the maiden ran and told her mother's household about these things. Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban and Laban ran out to the spring to the man. [Gen. 24:28–29]**

The servants do not follow her. Rebekah must first receive permission to bring in these guests. She is brought up to show kindness and consideration to strangers, yet she does not put her family in the position of her bringing a handful of strangers home. She goes home first, leaving the servants behind. When Laban heard, he quickly ran out to get the men and to bring them into their home.

**And it came to pass when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms and when he heard the words of Rebekah, his sister, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me"; he went to the man and here [lit., behold] he was standing by the camels at the spring. And he [Laban] said, "Come**

**in, O blessed of Yahweh; why do you stand outside for I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." [Gen. 24:30–31]**

Just as Abraham has hurried about when three strangers came to him (the Lord and two angels) back in Gen. 18, Rebekah's family is doing the same.

**So th man came into the house and ungirded the camels and gave straw and provender for the camels; and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. [Gen. 24:32]**

Just as a person with a horse does not do anything after a long ride until he takes care of his horse first; so it is with Abraham's servant. He does everything decently and in order. The camels needs are seen to first, then he and his men take care of their own needs.

**Then [a meal] was set before him to eat, but he aid, "I will not eat until I have told [you] my errand." He [Laban?] said, "Speak on." [Gen. 24:33]**

This servant does not even satisfy his own needs, even though he has ridden perhaps hundreds of miles to get there and has not have a home-cooked meal for weeks, if not months. He has a purpose; Abraham sent him there for a purpose; God led him to the correct place to achieve this purpose; so he places his mission ahead of his own immediate needs. Me, I would have had the hamburger first, and then mentioned why I had come.

What is occurring is a bargaining process, which was done when a wife was procured. Had Abraham's servant eaten a meal first, then he would have been unfavorably obligated to Rebekah's family.

**So he said, "I [am] Abraham's servant. Yahweh has blessed my master greatly and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, camels and asses. Furthermore, Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master when she was old and to him [Abraham] He [Yahweh] has given all that he [Abraham] has." [Gen. 24:34–36]**

The servant would have reported the events blow by blow to Abraham upon his return. From that information, Abraham would have written down what had occurred as part of God's Word. However, I think that the servant or Rebekah recounted this story to Jacob, after he was born—and he added it to the Word of God.

The servant has learned through Abraham that Abraham's prosperity came directly from God and that all Abraham had was a gift from God. There is no confusion as to Who is the giver. It is no wonder that Abraham trusted this servant with such an important duty because this servant is a mature believer in Jesus Christ.

**"My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites which I am dwelling [with] in his land. But to my father's house you will go and to my kindred and take a wife for my son [from them].' [Gen. 24:37–38]**

By this time, they would have known just who Abraham is, but there does not seem to be a trace of acknowledgement throughout this chapter. I do not know why that is. The servant undoubtedly knows that he has found those of Abraham's family and they go along with him, but they never inquire as to how Abraham is or how he is doing. On the other hand, this is only a portion of their conversation, the bulk of it took place during dinner and that is not recorded.

**"I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' However, he said to me, "Yahweh, before Whom I walk, will send his angel with you and he has caused your way to prosper; and you will take a wife for my son from my kindred and from my father's house. Then you will be free when you come to my kindred and if they will not give [the daughter] to you, you will be free from my oath.' [Gen. 24:39–41]**

Abraham's unnamed servant faithfully and accurately relates the gist of their conversation to the family, which I would guess would be at least Laban, Rebekah and their parents (see Gen. 24:50, 53). If the family is extended further and resides there, we are not told.

**"I came today to the spring and said, 'Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, if you will now prosper my way which I go in it.' Then [lit., behold] I am standing by the spring of water and it came to pass the young woman who comes out to draw [water], and I said to her, 'Please give me some water to drink—a little water from your jar; and who will say to me, 'Also you drink and for your camels also I will draw''; let her be the woman whom Yahweh has appointed for my master's son.'" [Gen. 24:42–44]**

You will note that all of what is recorded here involves the servant. We are not told what Rebekah said to Laban in its entirety nor are we told what he said to her; nor are we told of any of the other conversations which were carried on between the family members before the arrival of Abraham's servants. This is because the servants were not there to observe it and therefore could not report it to Abraham. This is why we had the barest of recollections found in vv. 29–30. However, the servant remembers everything which he said to the family (which is typical of human nature; furthermore, it is likely that on the long trip, he rehearsed the various scenarios in his mind as to what he would say in various situations).

**"Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder and she went down to the spring and drew [water] and I said to her, 'Please let me drink' and she quickly let down her jar from upon her [shoulder] and said, 'Drink and also your camels I will give drink.' And so I drank and the camels also she gave drink. Then I asked her, saying, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms then I bowed my head and worshiped Yahweh and blessed Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham Who had led me by the right way to take the granddaughter [lit., daughter] of my master's kinsman for his son." [Gen. 24:45–48]**

It is in this passage where we find that Abraham's servant prayed quietly, in his heart, to God.

**"Now then, if you will deal graciously and honorably with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." [Gen. 24:49]**

The adjectives describing how the family will deal with Abraham are *cheçed* (חֶסֶד) [pronounced *KHEH-sed*] and *'emeth* (אֱמֶת) [pronounced *EH-meth*]. The first word is translated variously as *kindly*, *loyally*, *loving-kindness*. However, this is best understood when translated *graciously*.<sup>62</sup> The latter word can be translated *faithful*, *reliable*, *steadfast* however, here, it should be translated (in this context) *honorably*. The servant is not pulling any punches here. If Yahweh has answered his prayer, which obviously He did, then the honorable thing for the family to do would be to release Rebekah to the servant. From a human standpoint, the gracious thing to do would be to release her. The servant desires to know their reaction so that he can determine his next move. All of this is said with the utmost of respect toward Abraham's family.

**Then Laban answered (along with Bethuel) and said, "From Yahweh comes this [lit., the] matter; we cannot speak to you bad or good. Here [lit., behold] is Rebekah is before you. Take [her] and go and let her be the wife of your master's son as Yahweh has spoken." [Gen. 24:50–51]**

Here, in the servant's recollection, he is not certain who said what exactly, but he gives the gist of what both Laban and Bethuel said. *We cannot speak to you bad or good* must be a Hebrew idiom meaning something along the lines of, *this is God's call in this matter; realistically, we don't really have a choice*.

<sup>62</sup> The Greek word in the Septuagint is ἐλεος, which means *mercy*, which is grace in action



**When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before Yahweh. Then the servant brought forth jewelry of silver and of gold and fine clothing and give [these] to Rebekah; also [he gave] costly ornaments to her brother and to her mother. Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and they spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me back to my master." [Gen. 24:52–54]**

The servant unabashedly worships God in their presence. Abraham's influence is clearly seen and Abraham's servant is also a tremendous witness for our Lord. We do not know whether the gifts are customary or a sign of Abraham's generosity and grace and appreciation. At this point in the narrative, the servant is speaking to the parents and the brother.

**Her brother and mother said, "Allow the maiden to remain with us days, at least 10. After that, she may go." [Gen. 24:55]**

This is quite a shock to the family and they realize that they may never see their daughter again. There are no other children mentioned. It is possible that they have grown and are married and that Laban and Rebekah are the two youngest. It is also possible that they are the only ones in the family (although that is unlikely in those times). In any case, the family faces the prospect of never seeing their daughter again. What they are requesting is what anyone would request. However, in 10 days it will not be any easier.

Furthermore, the word *days* (in the plural) is occasionally used for a year; and what may be being said here is for the maiden to remain a year, or at least 10 months. See also Gen. 40:4 Ex. 13:10 Lev. 25:29.

There is also the possibility that Laban would like Rebekah to remain awhile longer so that more wealth from Abraham could be acquired. Recall that this is a bargaining process. It is not unlike what occurs today among the wealthy (or even among the middle class). When a woman falls in love, the parents immediately need to know what the youngman does for a living. This is not cold-hearted or wrong. While a young woman is under the roof of her parents, it is their job to guide her through life's most important decisions. No decision other than salvation is more important than choosing one's marriage partner. No matter how rebellious a young woman might be, she will eventually gravitate toward her upbringing (if it was done well) and if her husband does not have similar norms and values, that will cause intense friction in the marriage.

**But he said to them, "Do not delay me since Yahweh has prospered my way. Allow me to leave that I may go to my master." They said, "We will call the maiden and ask her." Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." [Gen. 24:56–58]**

It has already been decided, insofar as we can tell, that Rebekah is going. What they have asked her is she ready to go right then at that time.

**So they sent Rebekah their sister away and her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. [Gen. 24:59]**

The words used for relationship are a bit more general in the Hebrew than they are in the English. The word *sister* means family member, with the emphasis upon the relationship between Laban and Rebekah. The word for *nurse* is a verb which is translated as a noun here and anywhere else where it is in the Hiphil participle (Gen. 35:8 Ex. 2:7 2Kings 11:2, etc.). There is one place where it is translated as an adjective (*milk* in Gen. 32:15; a description of what kind of camels). A more modern translation would be *nanny*. Since Rebekah is obviously grown, her nanny took on a new function as her servant; however, the relationship would have been such that she would have been viewed with the same affection almost as Rebekah's mother.

**And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands and may your descendants [lit., seed] possess the gate of those who hate them [lit., him (or, it)]." [Gen. 24:60]**

Recall that God has promised Abraham several times now that his descendants would be like the sand of the sea or the stars of the heavens and it is certain that he told this to his family and servants. This verse makes much more sense if one imagines that the servant relayed God's promises to Abraham. Again, we have an idiom *may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them*. The gate stands for the entire city and this is a wish for her family to possess the land and city of their enemies.

**Then Rebekah arose and her maids and rode upon the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.** [Gen. 24:61]

Because of association with Abraham, much of his family was very prosperous. His great niece has several servants of her own (at least three as *maids* is in the plural and not the dual). The area where they lived was named after Abraham's brother, indicating that he was the patriarch of that area. God blesses those that are His and blesses their families. If you desire to leave anything to your children and to your loved ones, pursue God, and they will be blessed beyond what you could imagine.

We have a type of Christ, presented as the servant, in this chapter of the Bible. A *type* is someone whose actions represent or parallel those of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "You search the [Old Testament] Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these [Scriptures] that bear witness of Me." John 5:39). In this passage, we have a model servant, a type of Jesus Christ.

### The Servant is a Type of Christ

1. He is there to represent his master, so even his name is not mentioned. He is there on the business of his master, not for his own pleasure. Our Lord said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him Who sent Me." (John 6:38)
2. This servant had seen his master whom he served. The family that he went to had not. In John 6:46, Jesus said, "Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One Who is from God; He has seen the Father."
3. The servant does not go where he is not sent. The model servant goes exactly to where he is sent. Our Lord, who originally was not sent to the Gentiles, said, "I was sent noly to the lost sheep of house of Israel." (Matt. 5:24)
4. The servant does exactly what he is sent for. Jesus Christ said, I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me." (John 5:30)
5. The servant is prayerful and thankful. Scripture records many prayers of our Lord. "Father, I thank You that You heard Me. Furthermore, I knew that You heard Me always." (John 11:41b–42a).
6. The servant speaks not of himself but of his master who sent him. "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He Who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true and there is no unrighteousness in Him." (John 7:18).
7. The servant speaks not of himself but of his master's riches and of Isaac. "Let not your heart be troubled; You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's home are meany dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you.." (John 14:1–2a).
8. The servant presents a true issue and requires a clear, no-nonsense decision. "With complete certainty [lit., truly truly] I say to you, he who heard My word and believe Him who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgement, but has passed outof death into life...For God so loved the world that He gave His uniquely-born Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 5:24 3:16).

**Now Isaac had come from Beer-la-hai-roi and was living in the Negeb. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening and he looked up [lit., lifted up his eyes and looked] and saw there were camels coming. Also, Rebekah looked up [lit., lifted up her eyes] and when she saw Isaac she alighted from the came and said to the servant, "Who is the mand there walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "He is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. [Gen. 24:62–65]**

Beer-lahai-roi means *the well of Him who lives and sees me*.<sup>63</sup> This was likely named by Isaac and this name reveals that he is a believer in the Revealed Lord.

**And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done and then Isaac brough her into the tent of Sarah his mother and he took Rebekah and she became his wife and he loved her. In this way [lit., so] Isac was comforted after his mother[']s death]. [Gen. 24:66–67]**

The information which is found in this verse leads me to believe that Isaac (or his son Jacob) wrote this down. In Gen. 25:7–8 we have the death of Abraham, which means Abraham did not write that. For some reason, people have trouble with the end of Deuteronomy where Moses' death is recorded. It is very simple: there has been throughout the recording of the early portion of the Bible a continuous narrative that one generation would pick up where the previous left off. Joshua finished the last chapter of Deuteronomy and began his own book; here Isaac has picked up where Abraham left off. It is very likely that Abraham left off writing with the death of Sarah and Isaac began with the advent of his marriage. His marriage would be quite important to him and would record every detail, just as the death of Sarah would be very important to Abraham; which is why he recorded every bit of information regarding that.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

<sup>63</sup> It could also mean the *well of the life and vision* (see also Gen. 16:13–14)

**Genesis 25** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 25

### Genesis 25:1–34

- vv. 1–6 Abraham's second family
- vv. 8–11 Abraham's death
- vv. 12–18 A brief overview of Ishmael's progeny
- vv. 19–34 Isaac's twins sons, one of whom is a Jew and the other is a Gentile

**Introduction:** Chapter 25 is separated into four distinct sections: vv. 1–6; Abraham's second family; vv. 8–11: Abraham's death; vv. 12–18; a brief overview of Ishmael's progeny; and, vv. 19–34: Isaac's twins sons, one of whom is a Jew and the other is a Gentile. Most of Abraham's descendants named in this chapter (apart from Isaac and his son Jacob) make up the Arabic peoples.

Properly speaking, the Semitic peoples are those who are descended from Abraham, and therefore, includes both Jews and Arabs. However, often the term *Semitic* is applied to Jews alone.

**Abraham added and so he took another woman whose name [was] Keturah and she bore him Zimram, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.** [Gen. 25:1–2]

The word often translated *wife* in this verse is simply the word for *woman*. We find out that Keturah was Abraham's mistress in Gen. 25:5–6 and in 1Chron. 1:32.

Ishbak, Jokshan, Medan, Shuah and Zimran are not mentioned in the Bible except for this passage and 1Chron. 1:32. Only the sons of Midian are found again in ancient history. They occupied an area east of Mt. Sinai, on the other side of the gulf of Aqaba. Their relationship to the Jews was good to begin with. Moses fled to their land from the Pharaoh when he killed the Egyptian taskmaster. Moses married a Midianite from that area. After that, as Israel moved toward independence and toward the land that God had given them, their relationship with Midian deteriorated a great deal. They also became a degenerate people to the point where God ordered the execution of their males and married females. The point is that quantity is not quality. The seed of Abraham would be raised up through Isaac. It would not have mattered if Moses married a dozen women and had a dozen sons by each one; still, his seed through Isaac would be prospered.

**Furthermore, Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim and Leummim; the sons of Midian [were] Ephah, Ephher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah; all these were children of Keturah.** [Gen. 25:3–4]

Most of these sons were fathers to various Arab tribes, these founders, for the most part, being lost to history except for these few verses. This Sheba is different from the one found in Gen. 10:7 and 28. Having the same name, being in the same line and/or having a brother with the same name does not make people equal. If I heard there was a Caucasian family in California with two brothers with names John and David, I would not assume these are my brothers. That's foolishness. Similarly, unless context and time period dictate it, people in the Bible can have the same name, often be in the same line, and not be the same person. It is normal to be named after an uncle, a great grandfather, etc. The country Sheba (now, Yemen) was probably populated by one of the Sheba's found in Gen. 10. The point of these verses is that God had plans and promises for just one person of

Abraham's sons and that was Isaac. Isaac was not just regenerated, but he would become a mature believer. We can assume that most of Abraham's children became believers, although at Abraham's advanced age, his ability to raise his children were probably severely hindered.

**And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, but to the sons of his concubines [lit., concubines belong to Abraham], Abraham, while he was still living, gave gifts. He sent them away from Isaac his son eastward to the east country. [Gen. 25:5–6]**

Keturah was Abraham's wife, but she is likely referred to here as a concubine (a mistress). It is likely that concubine is in the plural to refer to both Keturah and Hagar (although this does not preclude another mistress). However, the point of this verse is that Abraham only had one wife, Sarah. This was the only woman for him and his child by her was the child through whom all of God's promises would be fulfilled. The *children* which Abraham sent away were not little children; they were in their 20's or early 30's. God had promised the land to Isaac and Abraham, and not to these children. Allowing them to stay in the land would necessitate that Isaac's progeny eventually drive them out or kill them. It would be easier for Abraham to send them out of the land while they were under his authority.

**These are the days of the years of the life of Abraham, which he lived, 175 years. He breathed his last and Abraham died in a ripe [lit., good] old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people [lit., peoples]. [Gen. 25:7–8]**

Abraham lived an additional 38 or 39 years after the death of his wife Sarah. The children which he had by Keturah are evidence that God had rejuvenated him. The Midianites are evidence that he did have children; that these are not just names writtendown in a book. However, the rest of his children are lost to ancient history with only their general direction alluded to in v. 6. Being gathered to his people, a phrase used here for the first time, indicates that Abraham was resurrected and is with his ancestors and with Sarah.

**So Isaac and Ishmael, his sons, buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre (the field which Abraham purchased from the Hittites). There Abraham was buried with Sarah, his wife. [Gen. 25:9–10]**

Although living elsewhere, Ishmael heard about Abraham's death. It was likely that Isaac sent out a servant to find Ishmael. There was certainly a greater closeness between Abraham and Ishmael than there was between Abraham and the sons of Keturah. Therefore, he came to bury his father, but the sons of Keturah were probably not here for his funeral.

**And it was after the death of Abraham that God blessed Isaac his son and Isaac dwelt at Beerlahairoi. [Gen. 25:11]**

God poured out his blessing on Abraham and continued that to Isaac. It will be clear that Isaac will not be the spiritual giant that Abraham was and that Jacob will be even less spiritually mature. In fact, we will not find great spiritual maturity until we come to Joseph, the last son of Jacob. However, and this is amazing, we will come to meet Jacob in gen. 25:23 as one of the twins in Rebekah's womb, and he will remain alive until the end of Genesis (Gen. 50:1–14). Jacob receives more page-time in Genesis than any other person, although Abraham, his grandfather, and Joseph, his son, are by far greater men. Jacob was a slow learner, a manipulator and a duplicitous man, entrenched in human viewpoint that he returned to continually. However, he wrote much of the latter portion of Genesis, all of Israel is his progeny and every son that he had was a Jew. Furthermore, we sometimes learn more from someone who was a failure much of his life. Many of us can relate better to such a person.

**These are the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son whom Hagar, the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham. These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth [lit., in regard to their generations]: the first-born of Ishmael: Nebaioth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. These are they—the sons**

**of Ishmael—and these are their names by their villages by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes.** [Gen. 25:12–16]

With regard to authorship here: it does not take an Einstein to determine what has happened. Ishmael lives out in the Arabian desert and he has been blessed through his relationship to Abraham. He has had twelve children who are not known far and wide. However, since he came to the funeral, he and Isaac would certainly be speaking and visiting and Ishmael would catch Isaac up on his family. Ishmael would be about 88 years old and Isaac would be about 75. Ishmael tells Isaac the names of his twelve sons and Isaac recorded these in the Word of God. Of the sons of Ishmael, only Kedar has had his name carried down and attached to a tribe of people in Northern Arabia. Furthermore, this is based purely upon having the same name and not upon a clear lineage given in the Bible. The tribe and area of Kedar are mentioned several times throughout the Bible, but they have very little direct contact with the Israelites. Again, quantity is not quality. Despite the prolificacy of Ishmael, perhaps one of his sons was not lost to history. Furthermore, his entire lineage cannot be compared to Abraham's one son, Isaac; nor can it be compared to Isaac's one son, Jacob.

**These are the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years, and he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people.** [Gen. 25:17]

Isaac apparently kept in contact with Ishmael and with his sons. With regards to Isaac recording this: we have three possibilities: (1) Isaac wrote this and the next few chapters many years later in retrospect; (2) Isaac left a space in the tablet (assuming that is what he wrote on) to record Ishmael's death; or, (3) Moses, when editing the historical materials that he had access to, he placed this information here where it had subject relevance yet was not in chronological order. It is not necessary that we know these things; they are but speculation.

**They dwelt from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of your going [toward] Assyria; he settled [lit., fell over] against all of his relatives [it., brethren].** [Gen. 25:18]

What is described here is southern Jordan and a portion of Saudi Arabia. It is possible to translate the gist of this verse as them settling in defiance of their relatives, but recall that Abraham had sent Hagar and Ishmael away. Where they settled is a logical stopping point. Therefore, I would not interpret this as a move which implies animosity and the verse should not reflect animosity which doesn't exist at this time.

V. 19, by the way it is always translated, sounds as though we are about to embark on a genealogical chart of Isaac. In a way we do, but it is a short chart consisting of one set of twins; one a Jew and the other a Gentile.

**These are the descendants [or, better, this is an account of descendants] of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham was the father of Isaac and Isaac was 40 years old when he married [lit., took to wife] Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram; of Laban the Aramean.** [Gen. 25:19–20]

This is a curious time when men seemed to live almost a century longer than they do today and they got married later in life. With the way that we are bombarded by sex in the media, it is hard to imagine waiting until age 40 for the love of your life. However, Isaac was willing to do this and the Bible states that he loved Rebekah (or actually, Isaac recorded in Scripture that he loved Rebekah).

**And Isaac prayed to Yahweh on behalf of his wife, because she was barren and Yahweh granted his prayer and Rebekah, his wife, conceived. The children [lit., sons] within her struggled together and she said, "If it is thus, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of Yahweh.** [Gen. 25:21–22]

Rebekah is barren for 20 years of marriage (cp Gen. 25:20 & 26). It is possible that Isaac, being in love, thought very little about God during this time until he realized that Rebekah was not going to conceive. So he prayed to God and God answered his prayer. The word for sons gives me pause.

The word here for *sons* (or children) is used throughout the Bible for even adult sons. The Bible was left intentionally vague on some matters. One matter of great debate is the ideal kind of government or the ideal kind of church administration—I believe that the Bible was not specific in these areas because we, as Christians, can function using our spiritual gifts in all kinds of churches and we can live under all sorts of governments. In the matter of abortion, it is a more difficult issue. I tend to believe that unquestionably, the latest that a fetus becomes a child is the time wherein he takes his first breath, whether this follows an abortion or a birth. Therefore, any kind of medical procedure where the child draws breath and is killed is murder—however, it is clear from Scripture that child does spend eternity with God (since Christ dies for all of his sins and since Adam's original sin has been imputed to him, his volition has not become an issue; therefore all children who die prior to the age of accountability are saved). Verses like this seem to indicate that we have children within the mother prior to birth; however, on the other hand, this could be nonscientific language (which is found in the Bible) along the lines of saying *the sun rises*. It is language of accommodation and communicates what is occurring, but the literal meaning is not altogether accurate.

What Rebekah says is an expression of her great discomfort. It is not unlike saying, *I feel so awful that I just want to die*. Bulinger lists this sentence under *aposiopesis*, which means *sudden silence*. It is used when something is omitted or the speaker suddenly stops talking. Rebekah's pain was grief so severe that she could not find words to describe it. She could not understand how, if this was God answering Isaac's prayer, why was it answered like this? Why was it accompanied with pain and suffering.

**And Yahweh said to her, "Two nations [are] in your womb and two peoples born of you shall be divided; and the one shall be stronger than the other. The elder shall serve the younger [or, perhaps more literally, the great shall serve the little]." [Gen. 25:23]**

The word usually translated *elder* is *rav* (רב) [pronounced *rabv*] and it is translated variously as *great*, *enough*, *many*. It can be found in Gen. 6:5 7:11 13:6, 20 21:34 24:25 (and in many more places). The other Hebrew word, *tsâ'yr* (רצע) [pronounced *tzaw-GEER*] can be reasonably translated either *younger* or *little*.

This verse further illustrates the language of accommodation: there are not literally two nations within her (just as there are not two fighting children within her). This is called a metonymy when the action or the effect is used instead of that from which the action or effect springs. Here we are speaking of the two unborn children represented by the nations that they will become. Her trouble with carrying twins is spoken of as a struggle between two children. God tells her that this is a struggle between two nations. Her pain and discomfort during pregnancy illustrates what will occur long after birth. God has predicted what would happen between the two children as well. The oldest is generally given the greatest portion and assumes a position of leadership when the father has passed away; however, it will be the opposite in this case. The difference between the two children, as we will see, will not be a matter of the younger child being more moral or a better, kinder person. The second child will be the moral inferior of the eldest; yet he is an heir to the promise. The difference is regeneration—Jacob, the younger, believed in Yahweh and eventually grew spiritually (though, not as much as his father or grandfather) and Esau did not.

**When her days were fulfilled, behold, twins were to be delivered; the first came out red—all his body like hairy mantle—so they called his name Esau. [Gen. 25:24–25]**

ʿÊsâv (עֲשָׂו) [pronounced *gay-SAWV*] is said to mean *hairy* or *thick-haired* or it might mean *rough handling* (as in her birth). Strong's #6215 BDB #796. It is a form of the passive participle of ʿâsah (which means *to make*; however it has a side variety of applications). The Hebrew word for *hairy* is *sê'âr* (שַׁעַר) [pronounced *say-GAWR*], which is similar, but not a great deal similar. The *ש* and the *ע* are transposed, the vowel points are the same, and the last letter in one is *ר* (*r*) and in the other, it is *ו* (*v* or *w*). There is a similarity and the hairiness of Esau may have come into play when he was named. Esau was also called *Edom* (v. 30), and that word means *red* (at least it is much closer to *red* than Esau is to *hairy*).

**Afterward his brother came out and his hand had taken a hold of Esau's heel so he called his name was Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when she bore them. [Gen. 25:26]**

Jacob's name is easier to get a handle on. In the Hebrew, his name is Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced *yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup>*]. This word clearly means, in the Hebrew, *heel, to follow at the heel, to circumvent, to assail insidiously*. Some Bibles call him *supplanter*, which is fine, but euphemistic. Thieme used the word *chisler* to describe Jacob, and that is a bit more accurate. Sometimes life is like a good drama and what preceeds foreshadows the future. So it is with Jacob and Esau—Jacob is the *chisler* and he circumvents the established code of the first-born being the principal heir. It is interesting that in the Hebrew, they both chose together the name Esau, but Isaac chose the name Jacob. It was a derogatory name eliciting some sympathy immediately from Rebekah.

**When the boys grew up, Esau [was] a skilful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob [was] a complete [and spiritually mature] man, dwelling in tents. [Gen. 25:27]**

This verse explains quite simply just what Esau was. Furthermore, there is nothing wrong with being a hunter. The Bible never speaks disparagingly of someone who hunts. However, it is not as clear what it is that Jacob is. The adjective describing Jacob is the Hebrew word *tâm* (תַּם) [pronounced *tawm*] and various Bibles translate this as *plain, quiet, peaceful, complete, ready, clever*. As you can see, this little word *tam* is difficult to lay a hold of. *Strong's Concordance* narrows it down considerably, but a quick trip to a Hebrew concordance fixes the meaning. *Tam* is found in Job 1:1 2:3 8:20 9:20–22 Psalms 37:37 64:4 Prov. 29:10 SOS 5:2 6:9. The concept which this word conveys is *undefiled, upright, complete and spiritually mature*. The translation *undefiled* in the Song of Solomon involves some interpretation whereas it could be translated similarly to the ways it is found in Job and the Psalms: perfect and complete. This would be apropos for such a woman. The Septuagint agrees with this rendering.

**Now Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game [KJV, venison] but Rebekah loved Jacob. [Gen. 25:28]**

Most translations are rather free here, including the usually literal KJV in explaining why Isaac loved Esau. There are only two Hebrew words, besides a conjunction and a preposition, here. The first word is *hunting*, which is translated *game*<sup>64</sup> (along with the conjunction *because* or *for*). Then we have the preposition *in* and the Hebrew word *peh* (פֶּה) [pronounced *peh*], which simply means *mouth*. Gen. 25:28a actually reads: *Now Isaac loved Esau because the game in his mouth (his comes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine suffix added to peh)*. What is missing is a verb, so that our attention is drawn to this phrase. It is called ellipsis and we supply the verb, recognizing that there is emphasis placed upon this short phrase. What you, the reader, should get from this is: *how extremely superficial of Isaac*.

Here is a serious problem revealed by Isaac's own hand. Both he and his wife had favorites. Personally, I never had a clue as to who my father loved the most out of four boys and I could only guess with my mother.<sup>65</sup> Despite their differences in temperment and interests, what is important is for the parents to express unconditional love toward their children. There should not be a situation where one child is clearly favored over another. This confuses the children. It is normal to love one child more than another just as it is to love one friend more than another friend. However, a parent should not reveal such a prejudice to a child. It was no wonder that both boys grew up in opposition to one another, uncooperative and always in competition.

**Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field and he was famished and Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of the red—that red—for I am exhausted [weak from hunger and hunting]." Therefore, his name was called Edom. [Gen. 25:29–30]**

Esau was 'ăyêph [אֵיֵף] [pronounced *aw-yafe'*] which means *to be exhausted (which can be a result of hunger and/or hard physical work or exercise)*. It is the state of mind where the body is so in need of food and rest that the mind no longer functions properly. The physical needs overpower the mind.

<sup>64</sup> Here, the act of hunting is a metonymy for that which is caught, namely *the game*

<sup>65</sup> Which I believe varied from time to time.



The doubling of the word *red* here supplements the Hebrew language, which has no superlative. The food seemed to be so good by its aroma that Esau expresses this by the doubling of the noun. For the grammarian out there, this is called epizeuxis [pronounced *ep'-i-zeux'-is*].

This soup or pottage is some form of boiled lentiles<sup>66</sup> (similar to beans) and Jacob, being the kind of person who hung around the tent a lot and was a complete man, was apparently quite a cook. He did not have the kind of relationship with Esau where Esau could come in from a hunt, offer Jacob some meat and in turn, be offered boiled beans. They were raised in competition with one another. There is not even a trade-off, let alone a hint of grace in their relationship. Whereas any well-brought up brothers would think nothing of immediately offering one another food, this does not occur to Jacob and Esau obviously does not expect it. The favoritism expressed by the parents put these young men at odds with one another. We would certainly like to place the blame for their unnatural brotherhood upon Esau, but it will become obvious that Jacob, if anyone, was the most petty and devious of the two.

**Jacob said, "Sell first, as on this day, your birthright to me." [Gen. 25:31]**

In the Hebrew, we have kaph prefix, which means *like* or *as*. It normally sets up a simile. However, Jacob is not using a simile here. He means this very day. I believe the sense taken here is that this is a softening of what he is asking for. He wants that birthright and he wants it that very day, but he softens this requirement was saying, *as this day. Sell me, perhaps even today, your birthright* might give the gist of what Jacob is saying. The approach is as though *today* is almost an afterthought, the timing being represented as not all that important, whereas it was of primary importance to Jacob.

As the oldest, Esau had headship over his younger brother, he would be the one to assume his father's official authority upon the death of his father; and a double portion was due the first-born under the Mosaic law (there may have been a similar situation here). The spiritual benefits were even more important: (1) it is possible that the family priesthood was bestowed upon the older; the seed of the Messiah was to come through Abraham, making it logical that the first-born would be able to inherit this privilege; (3) the first-born would be in the direct line of Abraham as the recipient of the promises of God concerning the land and his progeny. We have a dual weakness in these young men: to Esau, his birthright is not as important as his immediate needs; and to Jacob, he would rather bribe and swindle Esau to obtain this birthright rather than to use honorable means. Jacob's desire for the birthright was a sign of regeneration; his means of obtaining same belies his spiritual shallowness. God, in Scripture, tells us that Esau took his potential spiritual heritage lightly. Heb. 12:15–17 reads: **See that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it, may become defiled; that [there be] no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.** There was a spiritual inheritance to come through Abraham and Isaac and that came with belief in Jesus Christ, Yahweh of the Old Testament. Esau's birthright as firstborn is tied to this spiritual blessing. However, Esau, being extremely hungry, disregards that birthright and sells it for very little. This indicates that Esau is, at this time, an unbeliever. Jacob, although not a better person by any means, is a believer in Jesus Christ.

**So Esau said, "Look, I am about to die [of starvation]; of what use is a birthright to me? Then Jacob said, "Swear to me first" so he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. And Esau despised his birthright. [Gen. 25:32–34]**

In India, this food is considered cheap and common and used in various expressions which indicate this. This testifies to this day the impact that this simple act had upon language. Esau will sell his birthright, which means very little to him, for a bowl of this soup.

---

<sup>66</sup> This is found in vv. 29 and 34

The figure of speech used here becomes rather technical when analyzed. Polysyndeton [pronounced *pol'y-syn'-de-ton*] is when many *ands* are used and it is in contrast to an Asyndeton [pronounced *a-syn'-de-ton*] which is *no-ands*. The latter helps explain the former. The latter leads us past information which is not all that important and culminates in the statement where the emphasis is to be placed. We are hurried along, as it were, to the conclusion. With the continued use of *and*, everything is of equal importance. In reality, it is not. This has the added figure of speech *understatement*. To Esau, everything was of equal importance—eating, drinking, his birthright. God the Holy Spirit communicates to us that his spiritual inheritance was unimportant to him, which is why Esau was a Gentile and Jacob was a Jew.

What is unclear is, *just exactly what did this birthright entail?* Nowhere in previous passages is it clearly delineated that *such and such* is the birthright of Esau specifically. Even if we assume that it is related to the rights and privileges of the firstborn, we really do not know what those are either, as they have not been spelled out as of yet. What seems to be the most reasonable is that God has made specific promises to Abraham and that some of these promises would be received not by all of his descendants but by a particular line. “*And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your visiting, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*” (Gen. 17:7–8). Then God promised that these blessings would be fulfilled in a son by Sarai (who was 90 and barren at the time): “*And I will bless her and I will certainly give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her...Sarah your wife will bear to you a son and you will name him Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.*” (Gen. 17:16, 19). Since Isaac had two sons, it is unclear whether this promise extends to both sons or simply to the firstborn. Jacob, in this chapter, has sought to secure whatever blessing God has promised through his father’s father.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

**Genesis 26** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 26

### Genesis 26:1–35

**Introduction:** Chapter 26 deals only with Isaac and Rebekah in a situation which parallels the past of Abraham. Abraham recorded in Scripture how he deceived men in the past by claiming that Sarah was his sister. Isaac will do the exact same thing in this chapter. This is not the kind of thing that his father Abraham would have talked about and it occurred before he was born; so what makes the most sense is that he had the beginning of the Bible, much of it written by Abraham, which he carried with him (possibly, Isaac carried this with him in his own head).

**Now there was a famine in the land besides the first famine which was in the days of Abraham and Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech, king of the Philistines.** [Gen. 26:1]

Abimelech is a cognomen applied to a ruler of the Philistines just as Pharaoh is a cognomen of the rulers of Egypt. This is not the same person as we saw in Gen. 20, although it is the same area. Whether this was a nephew or son (or grandson or even unrelated), we are not told. This is almost a hundred years later. There are many people who, by human viewpoint, are in the most enviable positions; and, insofar as the divine viewpoint of history is concerned, we do not even know who they are by name.

**And Yahweh appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Remain in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you. For to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands and I will fulfill the oath which I swore to Abraham your father."** [Gen. 26:2–3]

It's interesting that Isaac and Rebekah obey God, but then Isaac falls short of revealing any spiritual maturity when he remains in God's geographical will. We will never know what could have happened in Egypt or what God was protecting Isaac from.

**"And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heavens and will give to your descendants all these lands and shall all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendant [lit., seed]..."** [Gen. 26:4]

This verse better indicates why God told Isaac to remain there. Isaac was dwelling in the promised land; the land that God had given to Abraham and his descendants. Therefore, like Abraham, God wanted Isaac to observe and see the land that was to be his forever. God did not give him Egypt.

There would be a time for the Jews to dwell in Egypt, but now it was a time for God to give this Messianic line promises and for them to take a hold of these promises. When God promised to multiply the descendants of Abraham and Isaac, He said he would do so in the Hiphil perfect tense which is the causative stem and God looks upon this as a completed action. His reason for keeping Isaac in the land is that this is the land which God has given to Abraham and Isaac's descendants.

Again, we have the phrase that God would bless the descendants of Abraham and Isaac as the stars in the heavens. We would expect God to know the number of stars that there are but it is interesting that Isaac probably

understood that God was referring to millions upon millions of descendants. Before this phrase was in conjunction with the sand of the sea and here it stands alone.

Furthermore, other nations would receive blessing due to their interaction with the seed of Isaac. This has two meanings: the primary one is that the *seed* of Isaac is Jesus Christ, through Whom all peoples of the earth will be blessed. Secondly, the Jews will bear witness of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the God of the Universe, and the peoples of the earth will look to them for spiritual guidance.

**"...Because Abraham obeyed [or, hearkened to] My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws" [Gen. 26:5]**

This suggests to us that we only have a small fraction of God's speaking to Abraham. These are the exact phrases which are used in conjunction with the Mosaic Law, still to come, indicating that there was a set of laws and ordinances, certainly not as thorough as the Mosaic Law, which Abraham was under. I have placed the *and's* where they belong, which means that we are dealing with Abraham obeying God's voice and then this is enumerated by the things which Abraham *kept*.

*Kept* is the Hebrew word *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it originally meant to hedge about, as with thorns, in order to guard or protect an area. It means *to keep, to watch, to guard, to preserve*. The imperfect tense is for continuous action; Abraham continued to keep God's charge, commandments, statutes and ordinances. This word is found hundreds of times throughout the Old Testament and it is generally translated *to keep, to observe*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036.

What Abraham *kept* follows: *mish<sup>e</sup>mereth* (מִשְׁמֶרֶת) [pronounced *mish<sup>e</sup>-MEH-reth*] is a *watch, a sentry post, the act of guarding*. Here, someone has been entrusted with a responsibility and they have protected and guarded that responsibility or that sentry post. It is often used in conjunction with the tabernacle (Num. 3:28 18:4, 5 31:30, 47 etc.) and in conjunction with the ark of the covenant (Num. 3:31) or of Isarael (Num. 3:38 1Chron. 23:32). So God gave a responsibility to Abraham; He stationed him at a sentry post and Abraham guarded and kept watch over that responsibility. Strong's #4931 BDB #1038.

*Mits<sup>e</sup>vâh* (מִצְוָה) [pronounced *mits<sup>e</sup>-VAH*] is a *commandment or a mandate given by God or man*. It is almost always translated by the English word *commandments*. Therefore, God gave Abraham some commandments, some mandates which must be obeyed and Abraham did. Strong's #4687 BDB #846.

*Chuqqâh* (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khoo-KAWH*] is a *statute, it is something prescribed* and it is most commonly associated with rituals, symbolic rites, sacrifices and feasts (see Ex. 12:14 13:10 27:21 28:23 Lev. 3:17 etc.). We have seen Abraham in several instances erect an altar and offer a sacrifice upon that altar. This is an example of him guarding or keeping God's ordinances. Strong's #2708 BDB #349.

Almost all of us are familiar with the word *tôwrah* (תּוֹרָה) [pronounced *TOH-rah*]; and it means *direction, instruction, law*. This word is almost invariably translated *law* and, in Leviticus, it is associated with a detailed prescription for burnt offerings, as in Lev. 6:9, 14, 25 7:1, 7, 11 etc.). This is the only place where this word is found in Genesis; we do not see it again until Ex. 12:49 and 13:9. It seems to imply the idea of *written, transcribed or transmitted information*. However, I do not see it here as something which was necessarily written down beyond what we find in Genesis. There was likely an oral tradition of morality and animal sacrifice which was more more detailed than what was recorded and and much less detailed than the Mosaic Law. Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435.

In fact, this phrase is one that we would associate with the Mosaic Law. However, there is no manuscript evidence or indication that this may be an insertion insofar as I am aware of. This would imply, a reasonably so, that Abraham had a set of laws, precepts, ordinances, sacrifices, etc. which God had taught him over the years. These were certainly far less detailed than what we find in the Mosaic law, and very likely not even written down but this would make more sense than to expect that Abraham, by accident, just happened to follow many of God's laws

and precepts. Since so little of his life is actually recorded, we only have a taste of this in his many stops to sacrifice to God.

We must recall where we are. We are a dozen or so generations out from the flood. Those who were in the ark have now passed away, but Noah taught his sons for 120 years and they have passed this information on as they learned it from their father Noah. To discern man's understanding of theological precepts, we need only look to the book of Job. What we have seen so far in Genesis is limited insofar as theology goes, although we have seen the seed for almost every major doctrine of Scripture planted up to this point in time in the book of Genesis. However, it is my contention that the concepts of the book of Job existed at this time; that is, at least, the ideas and understanding of matters theological as presented in Job were understood by the world's populace at this time. The reason why it is likely that the concepts of book of Job is around at this time is that we see no complex system of sacrifice; there is no mention of Israel or any of the patriarchs; and there is no mention of the Law in the book of Job. Job himself probably lived somewhere between the time of Jacob to the time of the Exodus. The point that I am making is that if Job and his friends understood that much theology, then it is likely that the Patriarchs had an equivalent understanding of God.

**So Isaac dwelt in Gerar; later, when the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, "She is my sister" for he feared to say [she is] my wife so that the men of the place should not kill me [lit., lest this place should kill me] for the sake of Rebekah because she was fair to look upon. [Gen. 26:6–7]**

When Isaac expresses his fears, *lest this place should kill me* is also spoken. However, there are no words in the Hebrew for *he said* for this particular quote. The KJV version recognizes that this is a quote, which is why they have the words *said he* but they are in italics (which means that they were supplied for clarity by the translator(s) but are not in the original text. This ellipsis puts great emphasis upon what Isaac said as opposed to the fact that he said it.

Abraham was tested in this same way and he failed twice. His testimony was weakened before the Gentiles due to this lack of honesty (as they perceived it) and lack of trust and reliance as God properly perceived it. Isaac is guilty of the same thing—he is dishonest with the men of Gerar and he is not relying upon God. This does not mean that we have to be naive or stupid in our dealings with man; however, God has unequivocally promised to Isaac and to Abraham that their descendants would be as the stars of heavens. Isaac is not concerned about Rebekah here; he is concerned for his own skin. God has already promised him concerning his descendants, so he does not have to worry about his fate when in the land of these Gentiles. God's promise precludes any harm.

The description of Rebekah is almost redundant, which gives added emphasis to her beauty. Individually, the words are not as dramatic. The first is  $\text{טוב} (\text{טוֹב})$  [pronounced *tohv*<sup>b</sup>] and it means *pleasing, pleasant, agreeable, good often in relationship to the senses (here, the sense of sight)*.  $\text{מַרְאֵה} (\text{מַרְאֵה})$  [pronounced *mahr-EH*] and it is the act of vision, which describes how she was *fair, good, or pleasant*. This word is even used of a vision. Therefore, she was very physically attractive; enough to cause Isaac to fear for his life when he was among people that he did not know well.

**Then it came to pass when there the days were long to him, that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out of a window and saw there [lit., behold] Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. So Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Look, she is [obviously] your wife so how then could you say she is my sister?" And Isaac said to him, "Because I said [I had better lie] lest I die because of her." [Gen. 26:8–9]**

We do have a word problem here. Although Owen translates this word *caress* and BDB gives the meaning of the word as *conjugal caresses*, what we have here is the word that Isaac was named after—laughter—and most translators go with the translation that Isaac was sporting or laughing with Rebekah. However, this would not be enough to cause Abimelech to realize that Isaac was married to Rebekah. What we likely have here is *playful, but familiar caresses* hidden behind this word. It might even be a matter of modesty on Isaac's part. He does not

use a word which would be embarrassing to his wife (as his son will read this); however, he implies that was what was occurring by Abimelech's response.

Abimelech obviously has some kind of morality or else seeing Isaac caress his sister would not have been a cause for concern. This indicates that there was some form of accepted morality and standard of behavior. Isaac is flustered and put on the spot so his speech is stilted. He knows that he has done wrong to lie to these people who have treated him fairly and with respect. He does blurt out an honest response, however.

**Abimelech said, "What is this that you have done to us? I could have easily lain one of the people with your wife and you would have brought upon us guilt." [Gen. 26:10]**

Abimelech reveals even a higher regard for morality. He understands that it is wrong to commit adultery, which puts him ahead of many people today who are *more evolved* and he understands that there is more to it than just simple adultery to Isaac. Otherwise, he could slough it off as it was Isaac's fault for not being straight with him. However, Abimelech has a higher concern that even committing the act in ignorance would result in guilt.

**So Abimelech warned all the people, saying "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death." [Gen. 26:11]**

Abimelech reveals great morality and accuracy in dealing with people and protects both Isaac and his wife. He probably realizes that Isaac does have a certain *in* with God, which results in discipline and local devastation if the people of that area retaliate or cause Isaac any grief.

**And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped [lit., found] in the same year a hundredfold because Yahweh blessed him. And the man became rich and gained more and more, becoming great until he became very wealthy. [Gen. 26:12–13]**

Obviously God deals with Isaac on the basis of his salvation, on the basis of grace and because of his father, Abraham. God does not severely punish Isaac. Some people have a hard time understanding that; however, there will be times when we deserve nothing from God; and then His blessings will overflow to us. He can deal with us in grace because Jesus Christ has died on our behalf on the cross. Even though the church age is sometimes called the age of grace, God has always dealt with His saved in grace.

I want you to notice one other thing: Isaac moved to Gerar while there was a famine in the Negev. Now, although it is not clearly during that same time period, it appears as though Isaac is enjoying great blessing while his general area is facing famine. God is able to bless us, no matter what is occurring all around us. However, do not misapply this. Do not think that, under national judgment or disaster that you will automatically not suffer any hardship. That is not what we are to glean from this passage. God can and He does bless His own in the midst of a judgment; however, we are not guaranteed to be free of this judgment.

One of the difficult concepts of Scripture is that of a corporate witness. A nation, a marriage and a family can all be corporate witnesses for Jesus Christ. This means that, as a corporation, sometimes the members will be judged and sometimes they will be blessed as a corporate unit. Now, this does not mean that, being part of a particular nation or city that you will face exactly what everyone else's faces within that corporate unit—in our example here, Isaac seems to be enjoying great blessing in the midst of a famine—but, quite often, we are treated as a part of a corporate unit.

Let me try to be a little more specific. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, but you have forsaken Bible class and spiritual growth, you might be emblematic of what is wrong with your corporate witness (as the member of a family, as the citizen of a particular city, state or nation); and you can expect to be judged in a manner consistent with the judgment laid upon the corporation that you are a part of. So, you may be a part of a community which suffers some natural disaster—fire, hurricane, tornadoes—and what you suffer will be typical of your community.

However, if you are a growing believer, consistent in your intake of doctrine, then one of two things will occur, when those in your periphery are judged (or blessed): (1) like Isaac, you may enjoy great blessing, despite what is going on around you; or, (2) you may enjoy suffering for blessing, as a part of this community. In the latter case, you are not under discipline, you have not done anything wrong, but you are either being tested to accelerate your growth or you are being placed under pressure as a witness to those around you. Let me continue with this tangent: during a national judgment (or a judgment on your community), you cannot always expect to emerge unscathed. In fact, those around you may resent you greatly if that is the case, thus rendering your witness ineffective. Sometimes, you have to witness to these people from their level of suffering. In either case, God will see to your needs and God will bless you. However, just recognize that this may or may not include being blessed a hundredfold, as Isaac is blessed here.

**He had possessions of flocks, possessions of herds, a great household, so that the Philistine envied him. So the Philistines stopped all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham and filled them with earth. [Gen. 26:14–15]**

God had prospered Isaac to such a point that the men of the land, the Philistines, became extremely jealous and began to act upon their jealousy. One of the very worst mental attitude sins for a person to harbor is jealousy. These Philistines acted upon their jealousy and, although unprovoked, began taking retaliatory measures. One of the most valuable assets in those days was a well. As we know, Palestine is not known for its abundant lakes and rivers, so that much of the area depends upon rain and upon wells for water. Herdsmen were absolutely dependent upon their knowledge of the location of the wells in their vicinity and the ability to use same. Sheep can't go but 3 or 4 days without water. There were different things which the Philistines could have done; here, by filling up the wells, they were indicating that those of Isaac's household should move to another area. They did not attack Isaac or his people (and possibly because they were in fear of his strength) but they did indicate by this that they wanted him out of this area. This is not unlike burning a cross on someone's lawn.

Digging a well was often the way a person laid claim to unoccupied territory in the East. Filling up a well was, for all intents and purposes, a declaration of war. When the Philistines did this to Isaac, the rightful heir to these wells, that meant that they were willing to back up this act of aggression with force. There is no indication at this time that God chose for Isaac to retaliate. A more common response to this hostile act can be observed in 2Kings 3:19 & 25.

This is rather fascinating. There are those who believe that life is a zero-sum game. That is, if someone is prosperous and makes a lot of money, then he took it from someone else. The only thing an enemy of yours dislikes more than you is you being blessed by God. So, if you take these two things and put them together, the end result is a lot of animosity, which is what Isaac faced here.

Believing in a zero-sum game is an evil philosophy. It is based upon greed, feelings of entitlement, and, most of all, envy for what someone else has. These are people whose weakness is the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment, *You will not covet*. Not only do they covet, but this consumes them. They always feel as though God has given them the short end of the stick (if they believe in God at all); they see themselves as victims, they seem themselves as someone who is taken advantage of. They have a job which often involves minimal skills, and it upsets them that their manager makes more than they do and that the corporation owner makes way more than they do. They seek to redress this evil (evil in their own eyes) through lawsuits and/or a *progressive tax system*. Both cases are poor ways to deal with the unequal distribution of goods, as the two entities involved here—the government and lawyers—are going to skim off the top a hefty percentage for themselves.

Let me be clear: you will always know someone who makes more than you do or has more than you do; and, in many cases, you will be aware of those who spend more money in a day or in a week than you will have run through your fingers in a lifetime. The monetary success of someone else is none of your concern. If it is a friend, loved one or relative, you should be happy for them; if it is someone whom you do not know, then it should mean nothing to you. You shouldn't feel upset about it; you should not feel jealous; it should be a non-issue in your life.

What we had here were Philistines who were quite upset over Isaac's success. This is wrong; this is evil. This is covetousness pure and simply (or, if you would rather, envy or jealousy).

**Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us because you are much mightier than we."**  
[Gen. 26:16]

One must recall that a leader and his people are not one and the same. There is no indication whatsoever that Abimelech ordered the filling of the wells and what we know of his character indicates that he did not. Nor were all the Philistines involved in filling of the wells. However, there was a strong contingency that wanted to see Isaac gone. Their attack upon Isaac's resources and likely meetings between various disgruntled Philistines and Abimelech likely initiated this meeting between Abimelech and Isaac. Every indication from this short passage is that he is a moral man with virtue who is above board in his dealings with others (as was his predecessor who we met several chapters ago). He was forthright, candid and honest. He did not have to attack Isaac behind his back or at night, but he realized that there was a problem. He offers his solution as the leader of the land.

**So Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there. But Isaac returned again and dug the wells of water which had been dug in the days of Abraham his father (because the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham) and he gave them [the wells] names according to the names which his father had given them.** [Gen. 26:17–18]

It was not God's plan for Isaac to be outside of the land at this point in time. He left Gerar out of respect for Abimelech and did not travel all that far away, but it was far enough for the Philistines. However, for reasons that we are not privy to, after a time period which could have been years or even decades, Isaac returned to this area.

Or, Isaac's return to this area simply means that he previously lived on the outskirts of Gerar with his father, and leaving Gerar, *returned* to that area.

**However, when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of gushing water then the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen saying, "The water is ours" so he called the name of the well Esek because they contended with him.** [Gen. 26:19–20]

The word for *quarrel* in the Hebrew is 'âsaq (עַשָּׂק) [pronounced *gaw-SAHK*] and the well was called 'êseq (עַשְׂקָה) [pronounced *ĠAY-sehk*]. It is almost unclear in this verse whether the servants of Isaac dug this particular well or whether it was a natural well of flowing water.

What Isaac's servants did was the Qal imperfect of *mâtsâ'* (מָצָא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*], which means *to find, acquire, attain*. Because *matsah* could mean *to attain*, it is possible that they dug this well and attained this gushing water. However, the use of the flowing water, the claim of the Philistines upon this well, and the more common understanding of *matsa* as *to find* indicates that they merely discovered this well. It is obvious to the Philistines that this well was not dug, therefore they laid claim to it. Had Abimelech come along and asserted that this was his well, we could believe him because he was a moral man. However, these others are the same kind who filled up Isaac's wells. They just recognized that they could lay claim to this well, although they probably had never seen it before. Because of the absolute necessity of having access to several wells, Isaac had to negotiate to use the wells from that area (including the ones which he had dug). We do not know just exactly how well-defined the boundaries were for Abimelech's sphere of influence, but Isaac was close enough to have to work with the Philistines and Abimelech with regards to the use of these wells. Lessor men would have done battle over this well. We will see Isaac move further south until he arrives at Beer-sheba (the southern portion of Palestine), which is outside of Abimelech's control.

**Then they dug another well and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well and they did not quarrel over that, so he called its name Rehoboth, saying, "For now, Yahweh had made room for us and we will be fruitful in the land."** [Gen. 26:21–22]



Siṭnâh (סִטְנָה) [pronounced *siht-NAW*] means *accusation (by letter)*. So what happened is that the Philistines lodged a formal complaint with their leader, by letter, along the lines a deed claim or some such. Isaac is compliant and moves on.

The next well was called R<sup>o</sup>chôbôwth (רֹחֹבוֹת) [pronounced *rekh-oh-BOATH*] and it means *broad open places or enlargement*. There is enough room for Isaac and company there; an area over which the Philistines did not contend.

**He [Isaac] went up from there to Beersheba and Yahweh appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father; fear not for I am with you and I will bless you and multiply your descendants because of Abraham, my servant." [Gen. 26:23–24]**

Again, early on in the Bible, we are exposed to blessing by association. Isaac has not distinguished himself spiritually so far. He is obviously a believer in Jesus Christ but we do not know much else about him in the area of spiritual growth. There is no indication that he is any sort of a great believer at this time. In fact, because of his favoritism of Esau over a superficiality, because he has left the area without consulting God first and because of his deception of Abimelech, we can safely ascertain that Isaac needs to grow somewhat spiritually. God is exceedingly gracious to him, but that is primarily because of Abraham (this verse and vv. 3–5 make this fact abundantly clear).

**So he built an altar there and called upon the name of Yahweh and pitched his tent and there Isaac's servants dug a well. Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, his advisor, and Phicol, the commander of his army, and Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" [Gen. 26:25–27]**

Isaac was making a more permanent encampment there. He had no quarrels with the Philistines for awhile; they did not lay claim to this well, so he built an altar to God and his calling upon our Lord's name indicates that he was experiencing some spiritual growth. Calling upon God's name indicates some sort of religious service. It does not necessarily mean that Isaac is requesting God to come and talk to him but it would certainly involve prayer and animal sacrifice. See the doctrine of **Calling on the Name of the Lord—not finished yet!**

This gesture could be possibly threatening to Isaac. At first, seeing the additional men in authority, Isaac is uncertain as to the nature of this visit. His intention was to live far enough away from Abimelech and the Philistines that they could survive peacefully. Isaac had not been ordered by God to take the land forcefully nor was he to encressarily raise his hand against the Philistines. Just like Abraham, he was to live in the land which God would give his ancestors as an inheritance. Isaac claiming that Abimelech hates him is not accurate. As we have seen, Abimelech has treated Isaac with deference and respect and honesty. He has always been upfront with Isaac. When Abimelech sent Isaac away, it was as the leader of the Philistines, a man with authority and responsibility to his own people. He was attempting to establish a peace and to end the strife between his people and Isaac. Here, we can anticipate that he will approach Isaac with the same respect and candor as he always has.

**The said, "We see plainly that Yahweh is with you so we say let there be an oath between us and you and let us make a covenant with you that you will do us no harm just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace you who now are blessed of Yahweh." [Gen. 26:28–29]**

From what we have seen, there is every indication that these are believers and God's blessing Isaac made him a testimony to these Philistines. They recognize God's power and recognize that God has blessed Isaac in a phenomenal way. Furthermore, even though Isaac has made one glaring error, apparently his life and his behavior toward them has compensated for that mistake and that his life; his honorable intentions toward them has been recognized. That is, when Abimelech requested that Isaac leave or when their was a disputation over a well, Isaac complied. He was never aggressive toward them nor was he beligerant (insofar as we know from Scripture). They also recognize that the decisions made concerning these wells were possibly not righteous as

Abimelech obviously if he was going to err in judgement, it would be on the side of his own people. So it is obvious that Abimelech has thought about this a great deal and has discussed that with his chiefs of staff. They all believe in Yahweh and in His power and strength and blessing of Isaac. It is because of this that they are concerned about their relationship to Isaac.

Isaac here is a type of Jesus Christ, acting as an intermediary between them and God. They desire a covenant of peace between themselves and Isaac because they know that if they got into an altercation with Isaac, God would intervene and cause him to triumph. So their covenant with Isaac is in a sense a covenant with God. They cannot go directly to God; they know that Isaac can, so they go directly to Isaac. They remind Isaac that their relationship has always been one of peace, despite the disagreements (although they have emphasized the peace and have downplayed the disagreements).

**So he made them a feast and they ate and drank and they rose early in the morning and took an oath with one another and Isaac sent them on their way and they departed from him in peace.**  
[Gen. 26:30–31]

Isaac has agreed to this nonaggression pact, and being that they are all honorable men, this is a pact which we can be assured that it will stand as long as they are all alive. To me, their recognition of Isaac's relationship to Yahweh indicates that they are believers in Yahweh and will spend eternity with God. God promised that in Abraham all the nations would be blessed and this is an example of that. Just as we are individually witnesses for Jesus Christ, Israel was a witness to the Gentile nations on behalf of Jesus Christ, Yahweh of the Old Testament. Since there was no nation Israel at this time, Isaac was a witness of Yahweh, God of the universe. Such a feast was common once a covenant had been made and is attested to by many other classical writers. In fact, it was most common for parsimonious herdsman to subsist on a meatless diet (because the killing of a sheep or any other beast reduced their flock) and only during a celebration, the signing of a covenant or the greeting of strangers was the only time that they would indulge in the eating of meat.

**And it was that same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug and they said to him, "We have found water." So he called it Shibah, therefore the name of the city Beer-sheba to this day.** [Gen. 26:32–33]

If we examine Gen. 21 and stand it next to this passage, we should take care not to become confused. Here we have Isaac naming this city Beer-sheba (actually, he names the well Shibah and the city which springs up takes the name Beer-sheba—indicating that Moses, as the editor and copier adds this information); however, Abraham also named an area Beer-sheba also after a meeting with Abimelech. What is likely is that Abraham named the area Beer-sheba, but the name did not stick (particularly after the well had been filled up by the Philistines) and Isaac, finding himself in the same area under very similar circumstances, names the well Shibah and the name for that area, or that city which sprung up, now remains as the very famous Beer-sheba. Just because Abraham chose to call an area Beer-sheba does not mean that everyone and his brother has agreed that it will be known as Beer-sheba. In fact, since the Philistines filled many of Abraham's wells, that indicates enough animosity on their part to keep from adopting this name. However, when Isaac returns to the approximate same area and gives it the same name, this time the people of that area adopt the name permanently, since they have just signed a nonaggression pact. It is not unlike the name Israel. Just because there was a country Israel in the first millennium B.C. in the land of Palestine and, behold, there is now a nation called Israel in the land of Palestine, this does not cause us any great alarm; nor should this passage and Gen. 21. Furthermore, v. 18 tells us that Isaac redug many of Abraham's wells which the Philistines filled and then gave them the same names. As we will recall, this name means *the well of the seven* which refers to *seven witnesses*; and that is a synonym for a *pact* or *covenant* (when 7 people observe an agreement, then it is called a *covenant* as that is what they did instead of signing legal documents and getting these legal documents notarized).

At the end of this chapter, we have a sudden insertion concerning Isaac's son Esau. Nothing has been said since chapter 25 about Jacob and Esau the twins. They are possibly traveling with their father and possibly not. However, we get an update in this verse.

**When Esau was 40 years old, he took a wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were bitterness of spirit for Isaac and Rebekah. [Gen. 26:34—35]**

Isaac was careful to chose a wife with a similar background (actually, Abraham was careful to see that this was done). Isaac either has no control over Esau or does not attempt to find Esau a wife as did his own father, Abraham, on his behalf. Since Esau is well-to-do, he marries two women and choses two women who are Hittites, so they do not have the same training in God's Word or in theology. This further disqualifies Esau from heirship to his father's wealth. As a family, Esau and his wives were problematic for Isaac and Rebekah; and their descendants will also be at odds for the centuries to follow. *Bitterness of spirit* means that Esau and his choice of wives *brought grief* to Isaac and Rebekah.

The names of Esau's wives has been a topic of discussion of those would would discredit Scripture. They note the inconsistencies in the names. However, it is not unheard of for the same person to be called by two different names. At home, a young son might be called Bobby whereas in school he may be called Bob or Robert. When such a thing occurs, the school is not beside itself in an attempt to determine how many children emanate from the household. We have a similar occurrence with Esau's wives, which we shall cover in points (see **the doctrine of Esau's wives—not finished yet**).

Using the dating system from the Scofield Bible, this puts us at approximately 1750 B.C.. Other dating systems placde this around 1870 B.C.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---

# Genesis 27

## Genesis 27:1–46

**Introduction:** Chapter 27 is probably the last chapter written by Isaac. This chapter has interaction between Isaac and Jacob, between Isaac and Esau, and between Isaac and Rebecca. The common element in these 3 scenes is Isaac.

Jacob will take up the recording of Scripture in chapter 28. This chapter deals with the *stolen blessing* wherein Jacob seeks to fool his father and eke out additional blessing from Esau. Jacob was shifty and conniving whereas Esau didn't care as much. He did care about the blessings pronounced by his father, Isaac.

In any case, the line of our Lord goes through Jacob.

This chapter may be broken down as follows:

- Vv. 1–24      **Jacob deceives his father Isaac**
- Vv. 25–29    **Isaac mistakenly blesses Jacob instead of Esau**
- Vv. 30–40    **Esau returns and receives a prophecy instead of a blessing**
- Vv. 41–46    **Esau's hatred of Jacob; Jacob flees to Haran**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

**Edom; Edomites (from Smith's Dictionary)**

### Jacob Deceives His Father Isaac

**Now it came to pass when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see; he called Esau, his older son, and said to him, "My son" and he answered, "I'm right here [lit., Here I am]." And he said, "Please see I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now then, please take your weapons—your quiver and your bow—and go out to the field and hunt game for me and prepare savory food for me, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat that I may bless you myself before I die." [Gen. 27:1–4]**

Isaac believes that he is going to die soon and that there are some things that he needs to do before he dies. He needs to bless his favorite son Esau. This is #1 on his list to do before dying.

We would be hard-pressed to determine if Isaac has done anything spectacular to distinguish himself in his lifetime. God has made him exceedingly rich and Abimelech of Gerar and his men recognize that Isaac is blessed by God and that God is with him (Gen. 26:26–31). He also built an altar and called upon Yahweh's name (Gen. 26:25). However, his blessing has been primarily one of association (Gen. 26:24).

In the New Testament, most of the references to Isaac are in conjunction with Abraham and Jacob, as in the *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. Several New Testament references reflect upon Abraham's great spiritual triumph when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar (Heb. 11:17 James 2:21). These are strong, positive reflections upon Abraham—but what is most important is how this is a type of Christ, offering Himself for our souls.

One of the very few places where Isaac is mentioned apart from Abraham and Jacob is Gal. 4:28 when Paul writes to the legalistic Galatians who are trying to earn their spirituality and their spiritual blessings, and Paul writes: **And you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.** Nowhere in New Testament Scripture do we have a place where Isaac's great spiritual life is discussed—because there is no great spiritual life recorded.

He still has a favorite son and since he is dying (he *thinks* that he is dying), he wants to confer his blessing upon Esau, which will mean that Esau gets the lion's share of his inheritance. There are two reasons for this: (1) the firstborn in the ancient world got the greater portion of the inheritance, and (2) Esau was Isaac's favorite.

One of Isaac's fondest memories is that of eating the wild game killed by Esau. Now Isaac could have just blessed Esau right here and now and be done with it. However, he was hungry for some wild game, so this gave him the opportunity to do a bit of a trade out. As a father, he was within his rights to ask for a meal. However, I can't help but have the feeling that he tied his blessing to this meal. It seems too much like "You do this for me and I will do this for you." On the other hand, it is equally reasonable that this was to be a formal feast wherein a ceremonial Patriarchal blessing was given. Although the ones mentioned are only Isaac, Esau and Jacob, we do not know as to how many people were in attendance or if this was an entirely private ceremony. The amount of food prepared indicates that this was a more or a ceremonial thing attended to by perhaps several witnesses. However, none of these are ever mentioned in this passage. Furthermore, no one speaks up, saying, "Hey, that's Isaac; it is not Esau." This suggests that the only people here are Isaac and Jacob (posing as Esau); with Rebecca lurking in the background.

V. 3 literally has Isaac ask Esau to *hunt me some hunting*. It was common in the Hebrew language to match up a verb with its noun cognate. This same coupling is found in Gen. 1:2 8:21 27:33 (among many other passages).

**Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau, his son, so when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to retrieve it, Rebekah said to Jacob, her son, saying, "Look, I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 'Bring me game and prepare for me savory food that I may eat it and bless you before Yahweh before I die.' " [Gen. 27:5–7]**

Isaac and Rebekah retained favorites all of their lives. For Isaac, Esau was his strong male son, the one to inherit all his blessing, and Isaac loved this son. Jacob seemed weak by comparison. Esau was the kind who went out and played baseball with his father and Jacob was the one who stayed at home and helped his mother with the dishes. Since Isaac played favorites, Rebekah did also, taking up for the rejected, quieter and, even, weaker, son. Since Isaac is getting old and there would be a semi-formal ceremony during which Isaac would bequeath his wealth to Esau, Rebekah was listening anytime that Isaac called Esau into his study.<sup>67</sup> She had likely formulated a plan a long time ago; if not several plans. God had already chosen Jacob and Jacob was already designated a Jew whereas Esau was a Gentile. Paul wrote, **For they are not all Israel who are [descended] from Israel; niether are they all children [of Israel] because they are Abraham's descendants; but through Isaac you descendants will be named.** That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is a word of promise: **"At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."** And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived [twins] by one man, our father Isaac; for though [the twins] were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's [pre-determined] purpose according to [his] election might stand, not because of works but because of Him Who calls. It was said to her, **"The older shall serve the younger. Just as it is written, "Jacob I have loved but Esau I have hated."** (Rom. 9:6b–13)

Paul's focus in this passage is God's predetermined plan and that his grace and His election are not determined by good works or by man's efforts. In fact, God's blessings sometimes seem to run counter to the actions of those whom He blesses. The larger point of these few chapters is that there is a spiritual heritage that the Jew has overlooked in his pursuance of righteousness; he has overlooked that the inheritance, the promise, did not come necessarily through Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob due to good works, because before Jacob and Esau did anything good or bad, God said, **"Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated."** This illustrates that God's spiritual inheritance comes apart from works and merit. And there is enough Scripture recording the conniving nature of Jacob (as well as Esau's disregard for his spiritual blessing) to indicate that God's blessing proceeded through Jacob apart from Jacob's merit.

---

<sup>67</sup> There is no actual study.

There is a long line of men and women who extend from Adam to Abraham and from Abraham to Jesus. Some of these men were great men: Adam, Noah, Abraham, David. Some men were not so great—most of the kings who came from David, for instance. Therefore, even when examining the patriarchs, there is nothing which ought to suggest to us that Isaac and Jacob were both head and shoulders over their brothers.

If we read v. 4 (“...prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”) and v. 7 (“Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.”), we notice that there is a difference in the quotation. Isaac did not say that he would bless Esau before Yahweh. Whether or not Isaac said this, Rebekah told Jacob that this blessing was before Yahweh in order to entice and to motivate her favorite son. All that might be involved here is material motivation. Jacob does believe in Y<sup>e</sup>howah and, even though he is not a spiritual giant by any means, he recognizes that the great blessing that his father has received came from the hand of God and was not of his own doing. This was motivation enough to enter into this deception. Obviously, not the highest or purest of motives; however, on the other hand, it indicates that Jacob believed Y<sup>e</sup>howah and believed in the blessing that Y<sup>e</sup>howah would give to the one upon whom the birthright was conferred and that puts him ahead of Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, indicating his disregard for the blessings of Y<sup>e</sup>howah.

**"Now, therefore, my son, obey my word [lit., listen to my voice] as I command you: please go to the flock and fetch me from there two kids of good goats that I may prepare them [as] savory food for your father such as he loves. Then you will bring it to your father to eat so that he may bless you before he dies." [Gen. 27:8–10]**

Rebekah herself is playing favorites. There is no later mention of her in the New Testament as a woman of great spiritual foresight. It is simply that Jacob is her favorite son and she wants him to have whatever he can get. She is mentioned but one time in the New Testament (Rom. 9:10) and no spiritual merit is afforded her in that passage. Jacob is a schemer and it is easy to see from whom he inherited this (whether it be behaviorally learned or a genetic trait<sup>68</sup>).

This may seem as though it is a great deal of meat; however, she needs to make it seem as though she is butchering an entire deer (or whatever wild animal that Esau normally brought in). Furthermore, they had a lot of servants and help. Having been brought up by parents who lived during the depression, I personally wonder about waste in a situation like this; however, nothing is said about that.

**But Jacob said to his mother, "Look, Esau, my brother, [is] a hairy man and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me and I shall seem to be in his eyes playing a joke and bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing." [Gen. 27:11–12]**

Jacob is not concerned with whether what is being done is right or wrong; he is concerned that it might not work. There is no talk of God or God's will in this matter. Jacob just does not want to alienate his father and his father's blessing through this deception.

**His mother said to him, "Your curse upon me, my son; only obey my word and go fetch them for me." [Gen. 27:13]**

His mother does not appear to be of much help here in matters of moral guidance. If Isaac ends up cursing him, Rebekah offers to take the curse upon herself (as if she could do that). It is not unlike the mother saying, "It'll be alright" to her crying child, whether it would be or not.

**So he went and took and brought [the kids] to his mother and his mother prepared savory food such as his father loved. [Gen. 27:14]**

---

<sup>68</sup> It appears that some sins may be related to our genetic makeup, but only when related to volition.

Rebekah, no doubt at Isaac's insistence, has learned how to cook wild game and she has learned what spices to use to make baby goat's meat taste similar. It is even possible that she has been planning this and has spiced the wild game in such a way, over the years, that she would be able to do the same spices with goat's meat. In terms of insidiousness, I wouldn't put it past her; in terms of foresight, I don't know how long she has hatched this plan. It could have been spur of the moment as to the details. However, what Isaac is about to do, to confer blessing upon his firstborn (and favorite) son is common and expected well in advance.

**Then Rebekah took the best [lit., the desirable] garments of Esau, her older son, which were with her in the house and put them on Jacob her younger son and the skins of the kids she put upon his hands and upon the smooth part of his neck. [Gen. 27:15–16]**

In the Hebrew, the word order is *then Rebekah took the garments of Esau her son older the desirable which were with her*. The reason that we know *desirable* goes with garments and *older* goes with son is that these adjectives agree in number and gender with what they modify, so they can be sprinkled almost anywhere in the sentence. Also, the separation of the words *garment* and *desirable* does not indicate that *desirable* was an afterthought of the writer as he wrote this. It is an adjective used as a noun to refer back to *garment*. This is one of the many forms of a metonymy where the abstract descriptor stands for something which is concrete.

Esau was hairy at birth and his hair apparently just kept growing. Jacob and Esau were clearly fraternal and not identical twins. The principle would have been the same however: Jacob is a Jew and Esau a Gentile. The key is regeneration; obviously, the key is not honorable, forthright behavior.

Why is Jacob the Jew? Because he is in the line of the Messiah. Messiah and all those in the Jewish race would come from his loins.

**She also gave the savory food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of Jacob, her son, and he went in to his father and said, "My father" and he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" [Gen. 27:17–18]**

It is obvious that Isaac is pretty far gone. He cannot see and Jacob has said so little, that he is not sure who he is speaking to. Jacob has brought food with him, which Isaac can smell and he was expecting that from Esau. So Isaac is not certain; the man sounds a bit like Jacob, but is carrying a meal with him as he expected from Esau.

**Then Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your first-born. I have done as you told me [to do]. Now please sit up and eat of my game that you yourself [lit., your soul] may bless me." [Gen. 27:19]**

Even though Jacob is following the orders of his mother, he is following them too well. He lies to his father and misrepresents himself for the sole purpose of receiving Isaac's blessing upon himself. It is even possible that Jacob is an unbeliever at this time; or, at best, a spiritually-retarded believer. He exhibits no spiritual growth whatsoever and he is a grown man, approximately 77 years old. Whereas, we tend to become old sometime in our 60's or 70's, during this period of time, men became old in their 140's or 150's (and some earlier than that—recall that Abraham was called an old man at age 100).

Jacob thinks the key to his blessing (like Rebekah) is in Isaac; however, the key to his blessing is in Yahweh. And what does Jacob want? He wants the material blessing that he has seen his father enjoy. He does not seem to tie this correctly to God and God's provision. He does not seek this from God. Christians do exactly the same thing today. They look to their job, their employer, their own savvy business sense for material blessing. And if these are lacking or obvious dead ends, they look to the lottery or to gambling. They might even pray to God to bless them through their gambling (how many believers and unbelievers have bought lottery tickets and then asked for God to bless them). It is as though they don't think that God has the ability to bless them so they give God this convenient opportunity by going to a city where there is gambling or they buy a dozen lottery tickets so that God will be able to prosper them.



**But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you so quickly discovered [the game], my son?" And he answered, "Because Yahweh, your God, granted success to me." [Gen. 27:20]**

Here we see the extent of the spiritual tragedy in their lives. Isaac is old and feeble—most guess 137—and Jacob is 77 years old. Jacob does not have a clue as to how to call upon Y<sup>e</sup>howah and has no clue as to the spiritual and material blessings that Y<sup>e</sup>howah can provide directly to him. He exhibits no spiritual growth whatsoever and even his salvation at this time is in doubt. This is Isaac's responsibility. Isaac and Rebekah should have taught their children from their youth up about Y<sup>e</sup>howah. Isaac likely had the Scriptures to this point in time and had added to them. What we are reading here appears to be Isaac's writing, as we record his interactions with Jacob, Esau and Rebecca.

Instead of training their children spiritually, Isaac and Rebekah played favorites; therefore, their spiritual knowledge was limited. Jacob, as a man of 77, knows Yahweh as Isaac's God, but he does not appear to know much else.

**Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come now that I may feel you, my son, whether or not you are really my son Esau." [Gen. 27:21]**

Jacob is old and is losing it but he still senses that something is not quite right. The voice is different, he caught, killed and prepared the wild game to quickly. His interest in being blessed. None of these things seem quite right to Isaac. He is old and cannot see, but he does suspect duplicity here (something which is obviously commonplace at the Isaac household).

In the KJV, the word which I have translated *really* is translated *very*. There is not a difference in translation but in the English meaning of the word. *Very*, at one time, meant *truly* or *really*. So the KJV here is accurate, albeit anachronistic.

**So Jacob went near to Isaac, his father, who felt him and said [or, possibly *thought*], "The voice is the voice of Jacob but the hands are the hands of Esau" and he did not recognize him because his hands were like the hands of Esau, his brother—hairy—so he blessed him. [Gen. 27:22–23]**

With the loss of his sight, Isaac's hearing perhaps improved slightly (although he lost his sight<sup>69</sup> when he was old, so the improvement of his other four senses was probably quite limited). His sense of touch was not improved, as we see here. He touched the hands of Jacob, and they felt very hairy. Rebekah was sure that these gloves would work because Isaac was so old.

It is even possible that Rebekah had seen (or heard) Isaac communicate privately with Esau and perhaps even observed that Isaac would check Esau out by stroking the back of his neck or his arms. He may have confused his sons before this.

**And he said, "Are you really my son, Esau?" He answered, "I am." [Gen. 27:24]**

Even though it was Rebekah that put Jacob up to this, it was Jacob who lied here to his father. One of the many things which I learned as a child from my parents was the importance of honesty. Honesty was obviously not taught in their home.

### **Isaac Mistakenly Blesses Jacob Instead of Esau**

**Then he said, "Bring it to me that I may eat of my son's game and less you I myself. So he brought to him and he ate and he brought him wine and he drank. [Gen. 27:25]**

---

<sup>69</sup> Probably due to cataracts.

A common literary style of the Hebrews was to give the general outline or the overall picture; and then go back and fill in the details. What occurred in general—he blessed him—is recorded at the end of v. 23. However, the circumstances surrounding that blessing are covered in much more detail in vv. 24–29. There are higher critics who have trouble, or express confusion and/or skepticism about the first two chapters of Genesis because they seem to record two different creation stories. That is no more true than this passage containing two different accounts of Jacob's blessing by Isaac. The latter verses give us more detail. Gen. 2 just elaborates what occurred on the sixth day. Here is an innocuous example testifying to that manner of writing.

**Then Isaac, his father, said to him, "Please come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him and he smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, "Observe the smell of my son as the smell of a field which Yahweh has blessed." [Gen. 27:26–27]**

Rebekah tried to leave nothing to chance. Since Isaac could not see, he could smell and feel and hear. Since Jacob could not do much about his voice, she had to compensate in other ways. Those in the ancient world were not quite as thorough in their habits of cleanliness as we are. When we wear a shirt one time, it goes into the dirty clothes. They waited a little longer before having their clothing laundered. Therefore, the smell of the person and where they had been would be found in the clothing itself. How did they stand it? It was commonplace. They became accustomed to it in their life as we have become accustomed to the lack of smell or altered smell on other people. Isaac is still unsure about his son's identity but he has become even more convinced. In a more lucid moment, he might have recognized the deception; however, at this point in time, he does not.

**"May God give you the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you and nations bow down to you. Be Lord over your brothers and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Everyone who curses you, be cursed; and everyone who blesses you be blessed." [Gen. 27:28–29]**

What Isaac says here and in Gen. 35:9–12 will be Jacob's blessing.

This passage is the only one of the Bible which suggests that Isaac and Rebekah had other children besides Esau and Jacob. Elsewhere in the Scripture, the only children mentioned are Jacob and Esau. It is possible that the word *sons* refers to *sons*, *grandsons*, and *great grandsons*. I am not prepared to say that the phrase *sons of your mother* is specific enough to refer to his brothers only. So Isaac and Rebekah both had their favorites and they may have had other sons.

### **Esau Returns and Receives a Prophecy Instead of a Blessing**

**And it came topass as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob when Jacob has scarcely gone out of the presence of Isaac his father and Esau, his brother, came in from his hunting. [Gen. 27:30]**

One of the reasons Rebekah hurried Isaac along was that she had to get Isaac in to see his father before Esau returned. This required enough time for them to chat, for them to eat and for Isaac to bless Jacob. She had to work quickly. They completed this deception just in time.

**He [Esau] also prepared savory food and brought [it] to his father and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game that you may bless me, you yourself." [Gen. 27:31]**

Isaac has just eaten a wonderful meal and has lain down to rest. The evidence of what has occurred was obviously removed, either by Rebekah or by Jacob (the dishes and the excess food, etc.). Esau has no idea as to what just occurred and Isaac, awaking from his slumber, pieces the scenerio together.

**Isaac, his father, said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, I am your son, Esau, your first-born." Then Isaac trembled violently [lit., trembled with a great tremble] and said, "Who was it then that**

**hunted game and brought [it] to me and I ate it all before you arrived; furthermore, I have blessed him. Yes, and blessed he shall be."** [Gen. 27:32–33]

The seed of our Lord Jesus Christ comes through Abraham, who was a great believer, and Isaac and Jacob because they were regenerate and formed the line of the Messiah. It is not clear that their brothers were unbelievers. I don't think that they were unbelievers; just somewhat less spiritually mature.

We will not see another great believer in this line until Joseph; and after that, Moses. Isaac can give his wealth and his blessing to whomever he chooses; still, God overrules when it is necessary.

The switched blessing and the duplicity by Jacob parallels God's choice and God's plan, but it was not what caused the seed to go through him. What has caused Isaac to tremble is that no matter what he wants to do, no matter how he wants to bless Esau over Jacob, he is unable to do so. Isaac is no spiritual giant (notice few are the times that God spoke to him; and the prophecy concerning his sons was delivered to Rebekah during her pregnancy and not to him—Gen. 25:23). In Isaac's long, unremarkable life, he has finally come to the point where he recognizes that God's will is greater than his own favoritism and this is why he becomes hesitant when it comes to blessing Esau and testifies before Esau that it is Jacob who is blessed. This is not Isaac's preference, obviously, but he is finally recognizing that what God has planned, God will bring to pass. There is nothing that Isaac can say to change that.

**When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with a great and exceedingly bitter voice, and said to his father, "Bless me—even me also, O my father."** [Gen. 27:34]

The writer of Hebrews again said, **See to it that...there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears** (Heb. 12:15a,16–17). Esau selling his blessing for a meal indicated how little he thought of his birthright (which was primarily a spiritual blessing) and God rejected him because he was immoral and godless and his repentance was emotional but it was not real. He did not stand upon God's grace. In fact, he went to Isaac, not to God, to ask for his blessing.

You can almost hear Esau's plaintive voice in these words.

**But he [Isaac] said, "Your brother comes with guile and he has taken away your blessing."** [Gen. 27:35]

The only blessing which Isaac can choose to give away is his material prosperity and even that was given to Jacob instead of Esau, despite the fact that Esau is strictly speaking the firstborn.

The blessing which Esau missed were words, words which acted somewhat prophetically—and they all knew and believed this.

**And he [Esau] said, "Is he not correctly named Jacob [lit., swindler, supplanter] because he has supplanted me these two times; my birthright he took away and see now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved for me a blessing?" Isaac answered, and said to Esau, "See, I have made him lord over you and all his brothers. I have given [you] as servants to him. Furthermore, with grain and wine I have sustained him. For you then, what can I do, my son?"** [Gen. 27:36–37]

Jacob swindled Esau but twice; once for his birthright (which entitled him to be in the line of Christ, the first-born and therefore the head of his brothers). Then, Isaac gave him a blessing which placed Jacob over all of his brothers (or descendants from his mother), including Esau.

**Then Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, my father" and Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then, Isaac, his father, answered and**

said to him, "Behold, your dwelling will be away from the prosperity [lit., fatness] of the earth and away from the dew of heaven on high; and by your sword you will live and your brother you will serve; but it shall come to pass that when you [are caused to] become restless, you shall tear off his yoke from your neck." [Gen. 27:38–40]

Isaac, in his old age, in his decrepid body, has finally come to the point of recognition of God's will for his two sons. This recognition, as his great trembling of v. 33 indicates, was accompanied by a sudden respect and deference to God's will and likely he confessed his sin because when he prophesies in this verse, it rings true. Now would be the time to examine the **doctrine of the Edomites (who are the descendants of Esau)**. As seen in the doctrine of Edom, prophecies concerning Edom abound in the Old Testament. Esau's relationship to Abraham and his being so close to inheriting the kingdom made him simultaneously a soft and a sore spot in the heart of God.

I need to edit this quite a bit.

### Edom; Edomites (from Smith's Dictionary)

E'dom. (red). The name Edom was given to Esau, the first-born son of Isaac and twin brother of Jacob, when he sold his birthright to the latter for a meal of lentil pottage. The country which the Lord, subsequently, gave to Esau was, hence, called "the country of Edom," Gen. 32:3, and his descendants were called Edomites. Edom was called Mount Seir and Idumea also. Edom was wholly a mountainous country. It embraced the narrow mountainous tract (about 100 miles long by 20 broad) extending along the eastern side of the Arabah from the northern end of the Gulf of Elath to near the southern end of the Dead Sea. The ancient capital of Edom was Bozrah (Buseireh). Sela (Petra) appears to have been the principal stronghold in the days of Amaziah (B.C. 838). 2Kings 14:7. Elath and Ezion-geber were the seaports. 2Sam. 8:14; 1Kings 9:26.

History. — Esau's bitter hatred to his brother, Jacob, for fraudulently obtaining his blessing appears to have been inherited by his latest posterity. The Edomites peremptorily refused to permit the Israelites to pass through their land. Num. 20:18–21.

For a period of 400 years, we hear no more of the Edomites. They were then attacked and defeated by Saul, 1Sam. 14:47, and some forty years later, by David. 2Sam. 8:13–14. In the reign of Jehoshaphat, (B.C. 914), the Edomites attempted to invade Israel, but failed. 2Chron. 20:22. They joined Nebuchadnezzar when that king besieged Jerusalem. For their cruelty at this time, they were fearfully denounced by the later prophets. Isa. 34:5–8; Isa. 63:1–4; Jer. 49:17.

After this, they settled in southern Palestine, and for more than four centuries, continued to prosper. But during the warlike rule of the Maccabees, they were again completely subdued, and even forced to conform to Jewish laws and rites, and submit to the government of Jewish prefects.

The Edomites were now incorporated with the Jewish nation. They were idolaters. 2Chron. 25:14; 2Chron. 25:15; 2Chron. 25:20. Their habits were singular. The Horites, their predecessors in Mount Seir, were, as their name implies, troglodytes, or dwellers in caves; and the Edomites seem to have adopted their dwellings as well as their country. Everywhere, we meet with caves and grottos hewn in the soft sandstone strata.

From Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Edom.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

In v. 40, Esau becomes the Hiphil imperfect of rūwd (רוד) [pronounced *rood*] and it means, in the Hiphil, *to show restlessness*. This word, in general, means *to roam, to wander restlessly, to go to and fro*. The Hiphil stem is the causative stem; they are *caused to become restless*. This is a word found infrequently in the Bible (therefore, making it difficult to render) and, once upon a time, it was regularly translated *to have dominion* and Strong says that this means *to tramp about*. However, BDB's translation is what I have given you here (although the possibly equivalent Ethiopic word does mean *to run upon, invade or to attack*). In this verse, the rendering I have

suggested seems quite reasonable. This same word shows up only in Jer. 2:31 Hos. 11:12 (both in the Qal stem) and in Psalm 55:2 (in the Hiphil, where it is translated *mourn* in the KJV but *restless* in the NASB).

The word which I have translated *tear off* in v. 40 is often translated *break* in other translations (KJV, NASB, *The Emphasized Bible*). The word for *break* in the Hebrew is pârar (פָּרַר) [pronounced *paw-RAR*] but that is not the word which is found here. This word is pâraq (קָרַף) [pronounced *paw-RAK*] and it means *to tear off, to remove, to break into pieces*.

### Esau's Hatred of Jacob; Jacob Flees to Haran

**So Esau [then] hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him and Esau said to himself [lit., in his heart], "The days of mourning for my father are approaching. Then I will kill Jacob."** [Gen. 27:41]

The *days of mourning* for Isaac refer to the time of his death (see also Gen. 50:10 and Job 2:13—this was a period of time which usually lasted seven days). Isaac was very old and weak and, as has been noted, his vision is gone. Esau expects that Isaac will die in the near future and at that point in time he can take his revenge upon Jacob. We will see that after Esau ruminated on his revenge, he began to mention this to other people. He first thought it in his soul and, after thinking about it for awhile (perhaps only a few hours) then he began to say this to those around him. We often will stew for awhile about a perceived problem or injustice in our lives, going over the details and enumerating the options open to us; and suddenly, we find ourselves talking to others about this injustice and what we plan to do about it. This is the destructiveness of mental attitude sins; they fester and become verbal sins and then they are acted upon. Esau's blessing in the future or lack of same is a matter of God's sovereignty; Esau should go to Yahweh in his own behalf. However, he does not do that.

There is certainly a problem with favoritism here; but also with Esau and Jacob's thinking. Even though the mother and the father both had their own favorites, one making up for the preference of the other, this did nothing but cause mental attitude sins in the hearts of their children. Jacob became duplicitous and Esau became hateful and vengeful. Not yet does Esau appeal to Yahweh, his Creator, for mercy and blessing. It is additionally sad that Isaac's favorite son never received enough training from his father to believe in Yahweh.

I am not aware of any passage at this time which indicates that Esau ever believed in the Revealed God. Perhaps this is why we have the strong statement: *Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated*. It is an anthropopathism, ascribing to God human emotions that He does not actually possess; however, it expresses in language of accomodation the divine attitude toward Esau, who was so close to the line of Christ, but whose eternal destiny is unknown to us.

**However, to Rebekah the words of Esau, her oldest son, were told so she sent and called Jacob, her younger son and said to him, "See [that] Esau, your brother, consoles himself concerning you [by planning] to kill you."** [Gen. 27:42]

Apparently, Esau spoke to more than just himself. He thought this over and over that he would kill Jacob. After awhile, he spoke this aloud to several people. A servant or a mutual friend heard him talking and went directly to Rebekah (and, interestingly enough, not to Jacob). It is possible that whoever went to Rebekah knew her better than they knew Jacob; and it is possible that they had more respect for her than for Jacob. Whatever the case, Rebekah knows how Esau is dealing with his bitterness.

**"Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise and flee (for yourself) to Laban, my brother, in Haran and stay with him awhile [lit., a few days] until your brother's fury subsides [lit., turns away]. Until your brothers anger turns from you and he forgets what you have done to him, then I will send and fetch you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"** [Gen. 27:43–45]

Rebekah has kept in touch with her brother back in Haran and she knows that Jacob will be safe there. It would not be to Esau's advantage to attack Jacob where much of her family lives. Jacob would be reasonably safe there. Furthermore, the blessing and the inheritance will not be issues if Jacob is out of the land. So this strategy is guaranteed to keep Jacob safe.

It is reasonable to question whether this is within God's will; however, Jacob will meet and marry two women in Haran, and their children will make up the tribes of Israel. God is able to take the mess-up volitions of these two brothers, Jacob and Esau, and still bring His plan to fruition.

Note what Rebekah said: *Until your brother anger turns from you and he forgets what you have done.* Recall that this duplicity was all Rebekah's idea—not that Jacob is above such a plan—however, it was Rebekah's idea. Jacob did nothing but go along with it. Now Rebekah speaks as though she is the loser here. She should not be forced to be without both Jacob and Esau, her sons.

With reference to the length of time that Jacob will spend with Laban, Rebekah attempts to diminish the amount of time that he will be gone. Therefore, she tells him to remain with Laban a few days. In the Hebrew, the word for *one* in the plural means *few*. Rebekah does not expect that Jacob will live in Haran for only a few days. Jacob will remain there for over twenty years. Rebekah, because of her deception (even though God had already promised the blessing of Abraham to go through Jacob), apparently will never see her son again.

**Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women; if Jacob marries a woman of the Hittite women such as these—one of the women of the land—of what good will my life be to me?"** [Gen. 27:46]

V. 46 is going to be the cover story, which will get Jacob out of Esau's reach. Rebekah's plan did not go according to what she expected (she probably did not think it out as far as the results) and she is unhappy. She will lose the son that she loves the most.

Rebekah will say that the problem in her periphery right now is, Esau has married Hittite women, and, if they are not careful, Jacob will marry some Hittite women as well. So she complains to Isaac—with the intent that Jacob be sent back east to their family which is there, to find a woman to marry. She cannot say, "Esau wants to kill Jacob because Jacob deceived you" because that will implicate her. She was there, the whole time, just out of Isaac's vision and hearing. She set this up; she prepared the meal; she told Jacob what to do and say. So, if Jacob suddenly leaves town, she cannot say that it is about this deception.

Despite all of this tragic human failure, God's plan keeps on going. It is His plan to go through two spiritually lacking believers and Abraham's maturity will manifest itself in his great grandson, Joseph. Human failure does not slow or hinder God's plan. We have seen failure on the part of everyone in this family, yet God plans to bless Abraham through Isaac and through Jacob; and their genealogical line will eventually lead to the Messiah (= *Christ*, in the Greek), the Savior (which is what *Jesus* means).

Through this massive mess and clash of egos, God will accomplish that which He has set out to do. The Jewish race will be founded upon regeneration, the issue of spiritual regeneration will be at the forefront for the Jewish race, not genetics. Esau will not be an ancestor to the Jews, while Jacob will be. Overt behavior is also not an issue. Jacob and Esau are both immature in their own ways. Still, Jacob believed in the Revealed God and on many occasions, Jacob will exhibit trust in the Revealed God. Therefore, God's blessing and the Jewish race flowed through him.

Also, Rebekah will never see Jacob again.

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

**Genesis 28** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 28

### Genesis 28:1–22

**Introduction:** It is difficult to determine who wrote Gen. 27. Isaac is so old at this time that it is unlikely that he physically wrote this, although he could have dictated it. There is so little that Isaac could have actually written in Genesis anyway (Gen. 24–26 or 27) that he could have dictated it in one or two sittings.<sup>70</sup> It is possible that Jacob could have written it; however, there is a lot of detail concerning what had occurred between Esau and his father. Chapter 27 is a fitting end for Isaac because, except for Gen. 28:1–5, he is never mentioned again in Scripture as a participant in any conversation or activity. In any case, Jacob probably did not write these Scriptures right away because he was spiritually immature—but he may have written them or passed them along many years later. Chapter 28 is undoubtedly Jacob's work, containing information only Jacob would know.

We begin with Jacob on his flight from Esau; we have some information about Esau and his third wife (information easily obtained by Jacob in Gen. 33) and we have Jacob's dream and Jacob's ladder. It is his dream which is very personal.

**So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him and said to him, "You will not marry one of the Canaanite women. Arise! Go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your grandfather [lit., *mother's father*] and take from there a wife—one of the daughters of Laban, your uncle [lit., *mother's brother*]." [Gen. 28:1–2]**

Even though Rebekah was not batting 1000 in the advice department, still it was God's plan for there to be some related progenitors for the Jewish race. Because Rebekah was probably considerably younger than Isaac, Laban's daughter (Jacob's cousin) would likely be considerably younger than he is. At this point in time, Jacob is approximately 70 years old.<sup>71</sup> He has lead a long life without being married.

Jacob's suggested marriage to a first cousin is not to be considered the *Bible way* as the genetic stew has changed since those times. Given the ages of the patriarchs, it is obvious that they were made of sterner stuff than we are today. Their genetic makeup was such that, even though there was a lot of genetic degeneracy following the flood, they still lead long and healthy lives during this period of time (a little more than double the length of our present lives). My point being that we do not go out today and marry our cousins. Genetically, we are too similar nowadays and such a move causes great detriment and risk to our children.

Paddan-aram (or, simply Paddan) is in the upper Mesopotamia near Haran, somewhat upstream from the merging of the Euphrates and Harbur Rivers. It is also mentioned in Gen. 25:20 and 31:18.

**"And God Almighty shall bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you that you may become a company of peoples. May He give to you the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants with you that you may take possession of the land of your journeys which God gave to Abraham." {Gen. 28:3–4}**

<sup>70</sup> I would not be surprised if the book of Genesis was principally passed along through memorization, as there are memorization tricks that seem to be build into this book.

<sup>71</sup> This is an extrapolation from the Patriarch Timeline.



This is perhaps the first time that we have heard Isaac sound as though he has experienced some measure of spiritual growth. He has resigned himself to the loss of his son, Jacob, and has fully accepted that, regardless as to the means, that God, as He had promised Rebekah (Gen. 25:23), will bless Abraham through Jacob and not through Esau. It is very likely that, immediately prior to time of Jacob's departure, that Isaac reread the Scriptures<sup>72</sup> and, after Jacob's parting, he likely added a few chapters himself through dictation to one of his most trusted servants. Here, Isaac sounds, for the first time, inspired and cognizant of God's plan.

**In this way, Isaac sent Jacob and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah the mother of Jacob and Esau.** [Gen. 28:5]

You may be thinking, *we know who all these people are and their relationships—why mention it again?* The relationships may be repeated, as this is may be a new writer of Scripture. Jacob recalls this information and he writes it down (or memorizes it) at some later date. He specifies the inter-relationships as one would expect to begin this portion of Scripture. We do not know if this was added to what Isaac wrote; of if it was written in a separate document entirely, later to be edited and joined together by Moses. I personally favor the idea that, none of this was committed to *paper* until Moses or perhaps one or two generations prior to Moses.

On the one hand, the repetition of the names could indicate a new recorder of Scripture; but it could also indicate that Jacob is adding to the historical narrative many years later. The repetition of the names could mean nothing at all.

*The Expositor's Bible Commentary: While each member of Isaac's family has thus his own plan, and is striving to fulfil his private intention, the result is, that God's purpose is fulfilled. In the human agency, such faith in God as existed was overlaid with misunderstanding and distrust of God. But notwithstanding the petty and mean devices, the short-sighted slyness, the blundering unbelief, the profane worldliness of the human parties in the transaction, the truth and mercy of God still find a way for themselves. Were matters left in our hands, we should make shipwreck even of the salvation with which we are provided. We carry into our dealings with it the same selfishness, and inconstancy, and worldliness which made it necessary: and had not God patience to bear with, as well as mercy to invite us; had He not wisdom to govern us in the use of His grace, as well as wisdom to contrive its first bestowal, we should perish with the water of life at our lips.*<sup>73</sup>

**Now Esau found out [lit., saw] that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-arm to take from there a wife and that, as he blessed him, he charged him saying "You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women" and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had left for Paddan-aram.** [Gen. 28:6–7]

Let's assume that this is Jacob's writing. The events of Gen. 28:8–9 would parallel those of Gen. 28:9–29:19. So Jacob may be recording this years later in retrospect. He has since matured, partially due to having the stuffing beat out of him in Gen. 32. Prior to the writing of this, he has made his amends with Esau and they have likely buried their father Isaac. This is how Jacob would have known this information in Gen. 28:8–9.

The brief information concerning Esau is found in this short passage and the bulk of the next few chapters will center on Jacob's life. The likelihood of Jacobian authorship is great due to these reasons.

When Jacob and Esau meet again, prior to the writing/recording of this passage, but long after its actual occurrence, the first thing that they would talk about would be their respective children, wives and their lives. Jacob would be intrigued by Esau's marriage to a third wife and to one who is not a Canaanite. Since this information chronologically fits into this place, that is where Jacob put it.

<sup>72</sup> Actually, he had the Scriptures read to him, since he was blind

<sup>73</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Gen. 27:1–40.

A thought occurred to me that I do not know how many other exegetes of Scripture have given thought to the authorship of Genesis and have come up with similar conclusions to mine, if any. For all I know, this view of Genesis authorship could be original with me or the opinion of hundreds of other Biblical scholars. I did not get this portion of what I have written from someone else (although the bulk of what I am writing is information which I have learned from those with the gift of pastor-teacher and the gift of authorship). However, this is not a major point of doctrine; the correct ascribing of human authorship just helps to explain what information is found here and what is not. What is logically missing is detailed information about Esau. This information is missing because (1) it is not through Esau that the promise goes; and (2) Jacob is the author of this portion of Scripture. Since the Bible is a product of divine and human authorship, it is only logical that we should have a divine and a human reason for what is found in Scripture and what is not. The human author does not wave his thoughts, feelings, literary style or vocabulary when writing God's Word. It is in this way that the written Word of God is a perfect type for the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, Yahweh of the Old Testament and the Creator of the universe. It is only by Jewish tradition that Moses is the author of Genesis (he is possibly the editor, although I doubt even that). There are no New Testament passages which ascribe Mosaic authorship to any part of Genesis, although there are several passages which name Moses as the author in both the Old and New Testaments for the other four books of the Law (see the *Study of Inspiration*). In terms of spiritual growth, whether you agree with my analysis of the authorship of Genesis or not carries very little import with regards to spiritual growth. If, on the other hand, you would prefer to have the correct view of the authorship of Genesis, then, you will certainly agree with me in this respect.

I left out v. 8?

**Then Esau went to Ishmael and took in marriage [lit., to wife] Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, besides the wives he already had. [Gen. 28:9]**

Isn't this typical of the unregenerate man? He adheres to form but not to substance. The key to marriage here is not to marry a relative, per se, but to marry a believer in Jesus Christ. When Cain offered a sacrifice, he offered the works of his hands, the fruit and vegetables that he gardened. The idea of giving something to God was what he thought was important. However, he, being spiritually immature, missed out on the spiritual aspect of sacrifice. The sacrificed animal represented Christ's work on the cross. His vegetables represented the work of man's hands; they represented man's religion, making God into man's own image.

With Esau, we have a parallel thought. Don't marry a Canaanite woman, marry a relative instead. So, superficially, he got it right. However, marrying a believer is what God had in mind. There are Gentiles in the line of Christ; they are saved Gentiles. It would be a reasonable hypothesis that the entire line of Jesus Christ is an unbroken line of believers (those who preceded Mary). However, in Joseph's<sup>74</sup> line, we have a break in the line with Coniah, the unbelieving king. This would be a doctrine worth pursuing. Esau does not realize that going to the line of Ishmael is not that much better than going to obtain another Gentile wife. Choosing a wife who believed in and revered Yahweh would have been the proper move for him to have taken. We do not know if these women fit the bill.

**Meanwhile [lit., and], Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran and he came to a certain place and stayed there because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and laid down in that place and he dreamed. [Gen. 28:10–12a]**

As we have seen, Jacob has shown no propensity toward spiritual growth. His father Isaac did not either until just recently. God still has a plan and this plan will be enacted even through these two who seem to be so lacking in spiritual maturity. We are about to witness Jacob's famous dream and Jacob's ladder. God communicated to mankind in many ways during Old Testament times. As the writer of Hebrews put it; **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many times and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in [His] Son.** (Heb. 1:1–2a) One of these ways was through dreams (since the completion of the written Word of God, God uses it only to speak to His own).

---

<sup>74</sup> Joseph, the legal father of Jesus; not Joseph, the son of Jacob.

...And, observe, a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven and see the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Further see Yahweh [Who] stood above it and said, "I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land upon which you lie, to you and your descendants I will give it." [Gen. 28:12b–13]

We learn from this dream (and from many other passages) that angels travel freely between earth and the third heaven. To Jacob, it appeared as though they were ascending and descending upon a ladder. The mode of transportation is unknown to us even today and perhaps today it might look to us like an escalator. What is important is the free, unhampered access which angels have to both heaven and earth. We know from Job that Satan goes to heaven and accuses us with information which he got on earth and that God does listen to this and then dismisses it on the basis of Christ's death on the cross.

77% of adult Americans believe in angels, according to a **December 2011 Associated Press-GfK poll**. I must admit this surprised me; but it is also good to know, in general, that 77% of adult Americans believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, according to a 2012 **Rasmussen poll**.

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Angels (Angelology)

1. As previously discussed, these are 2 angels who have come with our Lord to Abraham. However, it is not clear at this point that Abraham knows that this is Jehovah Elohim or that these are angels. Their purpose seems to be tied more to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah than it is to meeting Abraham. Gen. 18:1–2, 16, 22 19:1, 12–13
2. Our word for *angel* is a transliteration from the Greek word *aggelos* (ἄγγελος) [pronounced *AHN-geh-loss*], which means *messenger, envoy, one who is sent, angel, a messenger from God*. Strong's #32. Although this word is often translated *angel* (Matt. 2:19 28:2, 5 Luke 1:13–19 2:9–10), it is not used exclusively for *angels* (Matt. 11:10).
3. The existence of angels is clearly taught in the Bible, as they are found over 100 times in the Old Testament alone. However, this did not mean that people encountered angels all of the time. In Gen. 6, apparently every person had some kind of contact with fallen angels; but after that point, their appearance to man was rare; and since the completion of the canon of Scripture, it is not clear that any contact is allowed between man and angels.
4. Angels were created before man; and man is clearly inferior to angels (although this, apparently, will change). Psalm 148:2–5 Heb. 2:6–9 2Peter 2:11
5. There are both fallen and elect angels. Elect angels have never sinned; fallen angels have followed Satan (which is about a third of the angels—Rev. 12:4). Fallen angels are also called demons in Scripture. Psalm 103:20 Matt. 24:41 Mark 8:38 2Cor. 12:7 Jude 6 Rev. 12:7–12
6. Although I have heard discussion by many theologians about the redemption of angels, I have not come across any evidence that an angel can sin against God and then later be redeemed.
7. Angels apparently have an ability to adopt a physical, human form which functions just as our bodies function. They are able to eat, they are able to grab, and, in the case of Gen. 6, able to copulate with and impregnate human women. Gen. 6 18:8 19:16 Heb. 13:2
8. However, angels appear to have bodies of light which are not governed by the same laws of physics that we are. Daniel 9:21 10:5–6 Matt. 28:2–4 Col. 1:16 Heb. 1:7, 14
9. Although angels are powerful beings, they cannot stand between you and God; they cannot take your salvation from you. Rom. 8:38
10. We appear to be an object lesson for angels, who spend much of their time observing mankind. Eccl 5:6 Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 1Cor 4:9 Eph 3:10 1Tim. 5:21 Heb. 12:1. This is not too different from our obsession with watching movies.

Some of this material came from:

Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. 7, pp. 13–15.

Robert Dean's Notes, **Genesis Lesson #98**, 7/19/2005; accessed April 17, 2012.

<http://christiananswers.net/q-acb/acb-t005.html> accessed April 17, 2012.

For additional study, try:

<http://ichthys.com/2A-Angelo.htm>

<http://biblestudyplanet.com/angels-and-demons/>

<http://bible.org/article/angelology-doctrine-angels>

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angels.html>

As an aside, I mention the poll about believing that Christ rose from the dead, because this is directly related to our preservation as a nation; one of the lessons that we will learn in Gen. 18.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jacob is running away from Esau, and he will leave the land. These are his last few nights or weeks in the promised land. God tells him that this land has been given to him and to his descendants. Jacob's relationship to Abraham is deemed more important than his relationship to Isaac; this is why God calls Abraham his father (ancestor might be a better translation).

**"And your descendants will be like the dust of the earth and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and by your descendants."** [Gen. 28:14]

This is the same promise that God made several times to Abraham. Even the promises made to Isaac were made to Abraham because Abraham was spiritually mature. However, here we find a very immature Jacob—one who is barely saved and not much else—and God communicates to him again His promises.

**"Observe I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go; and I will bring you back to this land for I will not leave you until I have done that concerning which I have spoken to you."** [Gen. 28:15]

God's promise to Jacob goes for us also. **"I will never leave you or forsake you."** God has spoken to this to Jacob, a conniving so-and-so; an immature believer. God is with all of us and He will not forsake any of us. This does not mean that He is sentimental and compromising. Sometimes God never leaves us or forsakes us, but disciplines us heavily. God has not ordered Jacob out of the land and it is likely that Jacob will be outside of God's geographical will during this trip. On the other hand, it probably falls within God's permissive will and God will see His work done, even in Jacob's wanderings.

**Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely Yahweh is in this place and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome [is] this place. This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven."** [Gen. 28:16–17]

Jacob is not altogether bereft of God; he is a believer, albeit rather immature. However, he recognizes this land is the center of human activity on earth, from where God will begin His work. There is even the possible implication that this is the place from where angels travel to and from heaven. I am not ready to stake much on that, but that is the implication.

**So Jacob rose early in the morning and he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but Luz was the name of the city originally** [lit., *at the first*]. [Gen. 28:18–19]

Luz was the Canaanite name for this city (Jacob was probably camped out in the outskirts of the city). Bethel means *House of God*, and is an apropos name.

We may further examine the **Doctrine of Bethel** in Gen. 28:19, but let me summarize our findings:

## The City of Bethel

11. Bethel is located about 10 miles north of Jerusalem on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin.
12. Bethel is one of the first cities that we hear about in the Bible. Abraham traveled there from Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. 12:8
13. Interestingly enough, Jacob apparently named this city; it means *House of God*, as God revealed Himself to Jacob here. When the history of Genesis was recorded, the name *Bethel* was used rather than *Luz*. Gen. 28:19 35:7, 15
14. Jacob, in fact, is associated on several occasions with this city. Gen. 13:3 31:13 35:1–16
15. When Joshua enters the Land of Promise to conquer it, then we hear a lot more about the city of Bethel. In fact, Joshua conquers this city, along with Ai, its neighbor. Joshua 8 12:16
16. However, it apparently needed to be re-conquered in Judges 1:22
17. Bethel will continue to be a prominent city in Israel for many years to come.
18. Bethel, prior to this, was essentially, the spiritual center for Israel, where the Ark of God had been kept. Judges 20–21

This, of course, is a bare-bones examination of this city; but it is given just to give you an idea about Bethel. See the complete [Doctrine of Bethel \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Bethel is clearly one of the most important cities of ancient Israel. Jacob, in a rare spiritual insight, sees this land as God's. Generally speaking, Bethel and Luz are considered to be identical places. However, there is one passage where they are distinguished from one another in Josh. 16:2 where it reads *then going from Bethel to Luz, it [the boundaries] passes along the territory of the Archites to Ataroth*. However, there is no lamed (ל) which falls between the two names of the cities in Joshua; lamed is the preposition indicating direction. Furthermore, the Septuagint does not even include the word *Luz*, giving us the likely possibility that Luz is there by way of added information, as in *then going from Bethel (Luz), it passes along the territory of the Archites to Ataroth*. Luz could have been either in the original or inserted later. There are a couple of other explanations given by ZPEB<sup>75</sup> and other theologians, but they do not ring true, as Josh. 18:13 confirms that these two places are one and the same.

One might wonder the spiritual significance of this paragraph that I have just written. Why should I bother to even bring it up? The Bible is God's Word as originally recorded and the Bible should make logical sense with no internal contradictions. Although I may not have the ability to explain each and every *apparent* contradiction, I should be able to clearly explain some of them. God saw to it that no autographs<sup>76</sup> (and certainly, no originals) would survive and that there would be some intentional (and, therefore, some unintentional) textual corruption (this is implied by Deut. 4:2 Rev. 22:18–19). For this reason, since we have the whole Word of God, we have many spiritual gifts which have allowed us to ascertain the actual text and the true meaning of each passage in God's Word.

Some of the spiritual gifts which have come along over the past few centuries involved those of transcribing the text, language gifts, textual criticism gifts, etc. The majority of those men lead quiet, almost unknown lives, yet they have had tremendous spiritual impact. Without the gifts of hundreds of Godly men (and those are the ones who I can name), my discussion of Genesis would lack depth, clarity and meaning. Some explanations would not ring true. And even though I will never know any of these men here on earth, except by their names (and some, I will not even know that well), I recognize and acknowledge my complete dependence upon their gifts and will know them in eternity. It is because of them that I can present God's Word so that it makes sense and so that there are no real internal contradictions.

---

<sup>75</sup> E.g., Bethel could refer to the mountains and Luz to the city; or Bethel could refer to a small portion very near to the city. However, neither of these makes sense because (1) when this a set of boundaries is given, the two cities are usually separated by some distance so that the direction of movement is clear, and (2) if Bethel referred to a mountain range, then it would make sense for the word *mountain* to show up in the verse.

<sup>76</sup> Completely accurate copies of the originals

Another consideration of this verse is the oil. In terms of progressive revelation, those in the Old Testament did not have a full understanding (at least, not as full as we have) of God the Holy Spirit. They had in Scripture an inkling of His ministry toward us, as He is found in Gen. 1:2 (God the Father is found in v. 3 and God the Son is found in v. 1). However, oil represents the Holy Spirit, Who makes spiritual information understandable to us (natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit). Jacob, who is spiritually handicapped at this time, has divine information given to him in the dream and he has an understanding of this information by God the Holy Spirit. The rock represents his sleep and the oil the spiritual revelation.

**Then Jacob made a vow saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I can return in peace to my father's house, then Yahweh shall be my God." [Gen. 28:21]**

God will have to provide the basic necessities for Jacob because he is in the line of Christ and he is the only person through whom can come the Jews and the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Basic necessities is a given (and, had he any spiritual growth, he would have understood that). We as believers have all of our basic necessities taken care of. David, in the Spirit, wrote: *I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his seed [i.e., God's elect] begging bread.* (Psalm 37:25) Our Lord admonished those that are His: *"Do not be anxious concerning your needs, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? [implied response: yes] And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his height? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin. Yet, I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself as one of these. So if God arrays the grass of the field, which is [here] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace; how much more for you, O men of a little faith?"* (Matt. 8:25b–30)

This is called by Thieme, *logistical grace*. In order for us to have any sort of a spiritual life at all, the necessities must be taken care of. God takes care of these necessities. We do not have to ask for them and or make a vow in order to receive them. God will take care of all believers. What about those on the street who are begging for money or food—the ones who say *God bless you* when you give them something? God has provided for them, if they are believers and they have rejected His provisions. God has provided them a job and they have rejected it. The others use God and use His name to get what they want. They are not believers and they do not rely upon our Lord. This is why we have missions and poverty: to knock the religion<sup>77</sup> out of them, to remove their pride, and to give them God's glorious Word and salvation.

Why is Jacob making a vow? Because he is afraid, on his own, and spiritually immature. He did not have these couple verses to rely on, but God has just told him *"Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth."* It would be paradoxical to have descendants if you die without wife and children out in the desert. God has just guaranteed Jacob that He will take care of him; Jacob is just not spiritually mature enough to recognize that.

**{Jacob continues} "And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house and of all that You give me, I will give the tenth [portion] to You." [Gen. 28:22]**

Here is one of the many verses found in the Bible which, when taken out of context, is completely misunderstood (Heb. 4:9 and 6:6 readily come to mind when it comes to verses taken out of context). Tithing, or giving one tenth, is not spiritual giving and is not designed for our standard in the church age.

Jacob, in his spiritual immaturity, is making a vow to God that if God provides him with the basic necessities. God is in charge of taking care of our basic needs, but we do not have to vow to do anything in order to receive those needs. All we need to do is to take them and thank God for His gracious provisions. We should take this in points:

<sup>77</sup> *Religion*, technically, referring to the belief that there are things that we can do to gain God's approbation and therefore His salvation. *Christianity* is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We do not earn or deserve this relationship.

## Jacob's Vow

1. Jacob did have some spiritual information; he read and remembered that Abraham gave one-tenth of his possessions to Melchizedek, the king of Salem. (Gen. 14:17–20).
2. There was, during the time of the patriarchs, a spiritual code to which we are not entirely privy. This included a specialized priesthood which pre-dated the Law (Ex. 2:16 Heb. 7:1–11). Melchizedek was a priest to God (Gen. 14:18).
3. The basic difference between a priest and a prophet is that a priest would represent man to God (Heb. 4:14 7:24–24) and a prophet represents God to man.<sup>1</sup> In either ministry, spiritual information is given to the believer. The prophet communicated God's Word to those believers who listened and the priest, through the offering of sacrifices, revealed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:26–28). The priest, through sacrifices, covers the sins of man and propitiates God in his representation of man to God (Heb. 2:17 5:1, 3 7:26–27 10:11). The priest was a foreshadowing or a type of Christ, who would sacrifice Himself and enter into the true holy of holies, having made a sacrifice once and for all on our behalf (Heb. 7:26–27 9:11–14). A fuller discussion of the priesthood will be taken up in Leviticus.
4. A priest required some kind of financial support and that amount, as set up through the Law, and as possibly existed prior to the Law, was 10%. Therefore, it was right for Abraham to give Melchizedek, the King of Salem, the High Priest to God, a tenth of all he had (Gen. 14:20). This 10% is not a deal or a trade out which is made to God. Abraham, without coercion and without a vow, gave a tenth of what he had to Melchizedek.
5. Jacob is making a deal with God. This is a common practice of the spiritually inept and the spiritually immature. They get into a jam, they know little or nothing of spiritual information, so they make a deal with God: You get me out of this jam and I will do this for You. Millions upon millions of people have, throughout history, gotten into various jams or have faced tragedy and heartache, and have made these deals with God. Generally speaking, when God pulls them through (which He usually does on the basis of grace through what Jesus Christ did upon the cross and not on the basis of their puny little deal), the person who makes the deal rarely keeps up his part of the bargain, whether it was *to live for God* or *to start going to church more often* or *to throw a crummy dollar or two into the collection plate*. Why does God even tolerate this in us? The deal indicates some positive volition toward Him and some slight recognition of His omnipotence. With Jacob, God had not but 20 minutes ago promised him that out of his loins would come descendants as the dust of the earth, clearly implying that He would see to his basic needs and get Jacob out of that jam. **Jacob is expressing spiritual immaturity and unbelief when he makes this deal with God.** Jacob is saying, "Sure, you said that 'I will guard you wherever you go' but I'm going to sweeten the pot just a bit by throwing in 10% of my money just to make sure that You will keep Your promise." How trivial and how blatantly arrogant of Jacob to think that his vow means anything.
6. The difference between Abraham's tithe and Jacob's tithe is that Abraham did it in thanksgiving. He received deliverance from God and victory in battle and he was saying thank you to God. Jacob has received a promise directly from God, so he tells God, "You keep this promise You just made to me and I'm going to throw 10% of my cash your way."
7. Jacob is alive up until Gen. 49:33. Between Gen. 29 and Gen. 50 we do not find the words *tithe* or *tenth*. The point is that it is possible that Jacob never kept his vow and, even if he did, **God the Holy Spirit deemed it so unimportant so that it was not even recorded in Scripture.**
8. Allow me to offer a reasonable hypothesis that God, in His sense of humor, required a tenth be given to the Levitical priesthood so that Jacob, through his progeny, could fulfill this silly vow. I cannot offer any Scripture to back up this particular thought, however.
9. It is worth noting that sometime in Jacob's life he will reveal some spiritual growth, particularly at the very end of his life. Therefore, it is not too late for anyone to grow spiritually.

<sup>1</sup> This is an over simplification, as the priest also taught God's written Word to the people whereas the prophet brought God's spoken Word to the people, which later became the written word (Ezek. 7:26).

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---



**Genesis 29** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 29

### Genesis 29:1–35

**Introduction:** Chapter 29 is an incredible chapter. About 14 years are covered in this chapter and we see the marriage of Jacob and perhaps the most romantic verse in the entire Bible. He will see his family in Haran, the family that he has never met. We will see how Laban has degenerated into a lying SOB, more deceptive and unprincipled than even Jacob; yet God, in His matchless grace, will overrule him. We will follow yet one more generation in the line of Jesus Christ (Judah) and we will see the beginning of the line which leads to Moses and the Levitical priesthood (Levi). We will see once again the first-born, Reuben, who has all the advantages, yet will lose them in later years.

**Then Jacob got up on his feet and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked [around] [he saw] [lit., behold] a well in the field and saw there three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of the well were the flocks watered but a large stone was in the well's mouth.**  
[Gen. 29:1–2]

The gist of this passage is easily understood. I have my own particular peculiarities; one being a dislike for the archaic words *lo* and *behold*. *Lo* is actually the translation of a demonstrative particle from the Hebrew which is not too different from our English words *see, see here, look, observe*. What sounds reasonable several hundred years ago does not sound reasonable today and translators are always stuck with the problem to choose between a literal translation or to paraphrase considerably; the latter approach often making the Scriptures more accessible. I personally tend toward some occasional paraphrasing, such as I have done in this verse.

One of the very literal translations, and one which I refer to often, is Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*. An invaluable source book set to me has also been John Joseph Owen's *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* (in 4 volumes). Also, much to my surprise, I have discovered that in general, the *King James Version* is a very accurate often word-for-word rendering of the original languages (in fact, it is quite easy to find a KJV which includes Strong's numbers for each word, either online or for whatever Bible program you might use). I often refer to these more literal sources to make certain that my rendering as given here is not unacceptable when it comes to an accurate rendering of the action and thoughts expressed.

While I am on the topic of translations, the *New International Version* seems to be a very accurate rendering when it comes to ideas and actions. All translations have their problems. For instance, when it comes to v. 2, the watering of the sheep has the verb in the Hiphil stem, which is causative stem. Therefore, the most accurate translation would be *for out of the well were the flocks caused to be watered*. Rotherham, generally a literalist, translated this *for out of that well do they water the flocks* where *water* is translated as an active voice with the unclear subject *they*, a relative pronoun which has no antecedent (*they* is actually the sheep, which are caused to be watered). The also renders *water* in the active voice. In neither case is this any great cause for alarm. The general meaning that the sheep are generally watered there but they are not getting any water right at this moment is the gist of the passage. In a narrative, sometimes great latitude can be taken with the rendering so that a word-for-word translation along with the proper rendering of the stems and tenses is not found, yet the understanding of the passage is increased because the resultant English translation is easier to understand.

I personally aim, as do most translators, to find a happy middle ground between a word-for-word translation and a meaning-for-meaning translation. I probably fail more often than I succeed, conveniently blaming this on a limited life span. However, if you were to do a word for word study, you would be better off to consult a Hebrew concordance or a Greek concordance before looking to an English concordance. That would point you more in the right direction of the shades of meanings of the various words and to the double and triple meanings which some words carry.

As a result of the difficulties of attempting to find the right balance between a literal translation and a translation which may be understood, I have opted for producing 3 original translations, the first being very literal; the second being readable and very nearly literal; and the third one designed to convey the meaning, even though every word of the original may not be properly represented in the end product.

**And when all of the flocks were gathered there, they would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep and put back the stone in its place upon the mouth of the well.**  
[Gen. 29:3]

What is occurring here is in order for everyone to receive a fair share of the water from the well, there was a designated time for the sheep herders to go to this well and water their sheep. One man cannot go their earlier and take as much water as he chooses to and then leave because, by himself, he could not move the stone. In fact, it is possible that several men are required to move this stone (although in this chapter, Jacob will be said to move the stone).

So this appears to be a daily ritual to conserve water in this area. Perhaps wells would sometimes run dry. It probably will be based upon ownership; where Laban (Jacob's uncle in this area) possibly has claim to this well. What Jacob will see is a continual influx of sheep herders until Rachel, his cousin arrives and then the stone will be removed and everyone will be able to water their animals.

**The Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." And he said to them, "Do you know Laban, son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." [Gen. 29:4–5]**

The shepherds lead their flocks around the hills and the valleys, grazing on various land sites and then moving on to a new site with more foliage. Most probably have a route through peaceful lands and have along this route along with, perhaps, a list of wells to which they travel. At any given well, particularly at one like this, one might meet herdsmen from a half dozen different areas from perhaps as much as 50–100 miles away.

Jacob has never traveled here before and, although he certainly has maps and some sense of direction, his exact destination would be difficult to attain. There are reasons to assume that he traveled with his mother's personal maid (Deborah), who previously lived in this area and would have traveled from here to Canaan with Rebekah. Therefore, she may have some sense of the geography as well.

He knows that he is in the area and takes a stab at these men. Today, when inquiring about someone, we might say "Do you know Laban Ben Nahor?" We identify people with a first and last name, and, often to distinguish them from everyone else, we use their middle name. In those days, a man was tied directly to his father, who perhaps lived almost 200 years, and often became well known. So each person was known by his given, first name, and by the name of his father's first name. In the ancient world, they could not depend upon the first name alone because (1) there would be other persons of that era by the same first name, and (2) the son, by definition, may not be as well known as the father; therefore, if only the son's name is mentioned, it is possible that they may not recall who he is until hearing the name of the father.

**Then he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well. In fact [lit., and] see Rachel, his daughter—she is coming with the sheep." [Gen. 29:6]**

This is the first time that Jacob will see Rachel, the woman with whom he will spend the rest of his life (well, actually, the rest of her life, as she will die long before Jacob does). God has always brought a man's right woman to him. We may not recognize her, we may be in a downward spiritual spiral, we may be sexually (and, therefore, wrongly) involved. Jacob, for all of his faults, had waited for his right woman. She is a shepherdess. She will be the first person from his family that Jacob will see.

**He said, "Notice, still it is high day; is it not time for the animals to be gathered together to water the sheep and to go pasture them?" But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well. Then we water the sheep." [Gen. 29:7–8]**

This explains their tradition which allowed everyone to obtain a fair share of the water. This was a bit of law and order for this area. Jacob was not familiar with it, which is why he didn't understand, at first, why they didn't begin to water the sheep.

**While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with the sheep that belonged to her father for she kept them. Now, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his uncle [lit., *mother's brother*] then Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban, his uncle. [Gen. 29:9–10]**

Rachel is Jacob's first cousin and there is no Biblical prohibition against marriage between first cousins at this time. As was mentioned with Isaac's marriage, this was a stronger, more viable gene pool. If a breed of dog is further subdivided, the resulting breed will be generally weaker than the stock from which it was taken. However, weaker does not mean weak. What is important here is a similar spiritual background.

The impression here is that Jacob rolls the stone back by himself, which is possible. This is a law-abiding group of men who possibly could have waited until the time was proper. Jacob is behaving like a gentleman and is watering Rachel's flock first. This allows him some time to visit with her and to get to know the portion of the family that he has never met. Recall that, Jacob is there to find a wife of proper breeding (meaning, with similar spiritual sensibilities).

**The Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud [lit., *lifted up his voice and wept*]. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman and that he was Rebekah's son. Then she ran to told her father. [Gen. 29:11–12]**

This is an emotional moment for Jacob, who has been running in fear from his brother, to finally meet up with those of his own family. This kiss is one that is given to a family member here. This is not a romantic kiss.

Jacob does not presume anything. He still remains behind while she goes to her family.

**And it came to pass when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embrace him and kissed him and brought him to his house and he [Jacob] told all these things to Laban. [Gen. 29:13]**

Laban does not send Rachel back; he runs himself. It is a marvelous moment for him. However, Laban has become a user and a manipulator over the years. He will exude a great deal of emotion concerning Jacob, but he will be mentally working on another agenda as he greets his nephew.

The kiss, as in the previous passage, is a family greeting.

**And Laban said to him, "Surely my bone and my flesh you are" and he [Jacob] stayed with him a month of days. [Gen. 29:14]**

This reminds me of what Adam said when he first saw Eve—"Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!" This indicates to me that Laban knew something of the Scriptures, whether they were by word of mouth or he had seen

them written down. Why what Adam said is slightly different is that Eve was taken from him; Laban and Jacob are not that closely related. As relatives, the proper observation was the one that Laban made.

**Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, you should therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me what your wages will be." [Gen. 29:15]**

Note that Jacob has remained with Laban for a month first before Laban says anything. Jacob took off with some sheep and the clothes on his back (and possibly Deborah, his mother's personal maid<sup>78</sup>). He had very little with him because he had to quickly flee Esau. Laban took advantage of this and put him to work. It was done with great subtlety. Jacob almost without missing a beat, picked up with doing whatever it was the Laban needed done. He was a guest, but this was to be an extended visit; so Jacob immediately made himself useful. Laban carefully watched him. He remembered that his sister had been approached by a relative before and taken away. That was Isaac and Isaac had a great deal of wealth. Jacob has basically nothing. Laban cannot continue to have Jacob work for him for free, but he has noticed that Rachel has stolen Jacob's heart. So Laban has formulated somewhat of a plan to get the maximum use of Jacob.

**(Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the older was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes [were] tender but Rachel had a beautiful figure [lit., was beautiful in form] and (was) beautiful in appearance. [Gen. 29:16–17]**

This is an aside concerning Laban's daughters. The adjective describing Leah's eyes is *rak* (רַךְ) [pronounced *rak*] and it means *tender*, which possibly implies *weak*. This word is used in conjunction with youth in 1Chron. 22:5 29:1 and 2Chron. 13:7 and it is used with respect to *soft, tender* speech in Job 41:3 Prov. 15:1. It is used in a negative sense perhaps in Deut. 20:8 and 2Chron. 13:7, where it is used in conjunction with *heart* and together they mean *tender-hearted* or *faint-hearted*. Even here, this is not entirely a negative sense. I think that past translators wanted a contrast Rachel's beauty with Leah's lack of desirability so they often translate this word *weak*, as though Leah needed glasses or wandered about squinting at everything. It is possible that they took their cue from the LXX, which does translate this work with the Greek word for *weak*. However, the use of *rak* in Isa. 47:1 indicates that this word is not a negative when it comes to physical attractiveness. It is quite conceivable, if not probable, that both of Laban's daughters are very attractive, considering the gene pool that they are in. Nor is it necessary for Leah to be ugly in order for Jacob to chose Rachel over her. Leah's eyes are probably soft, tender and youthful.

A description of Rachel and the various translations which are found belies the prissiness of some translators. The KJV and Owen both translate the first descriptor as *beautiful*, which is fine, and not far from the Hebrew; however, such a rendering certainly sets off the buzzer on the *prissometer*. There are two words here. *Yâpneh* (יָפֵה) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*] unquestionably means *beautiful*, but it is used primarily of an attribute (not **as** an attribute) of a woman.

The noun is the masculine, singular word *tô'ar* (תֹּאֵר) [pronounced *TOH-ahr*], and it means *outline, figure, form*. Even *comely appearance* as found in *The Emphasized Bible* is euphemistic. Rachel had a beautiful body; she had a tremendously attractive figure. This word is in the masculine and, as often as not, refers to the figure of a female. You can figure that out.

Rachel is also beautiful (*yapneh*) with respect to *mar<sup>e</sup>eh* (מַרְאֵה) [pronounced *mahr-EH*], which means *sight, appearance, vision*. This is the outside, overall package. Jacob is writing this and the first thing that he says about Rachel is that she had a beautiful figure and that her overall appearance was beautiful. It is possible to have the former but not the latter (and, vice versa); however, I do not intend to draw any pictures or illustrate this with photos. Jacob is being diplomatic, yet accurate in his description. There is no verb used with Leah, yet he uses the Qal perfect of the absolute status quo verb in the Hebrew *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] with Rachel. This is completed action which stands. The first day Jacob saw Rachel she was beautiful of figure and appearance, and even as he wrote this, decades later, she was still beautiful of figure and appearance. Often the

<sup>78</sup> Deborah probably raised Jacob.

lack of a verb will bring out great emphasis, but Jacob mentions an attractive trait of Leah's and spends a little more time on Rachel (whose name is in the emphatic position). The bias, not seen in the English, is unmistakable in the Hebrew. **And Leah's eyes, tender; but Rachel was [and is] beautiful in figure and beautiful in general appearance.** Hopefully, this gives you a better concept of what this verse says. Leah, who was never Jacob's favorite, will also likely read this at sometime. She is not unattractive, although she might be less attractive than Rachel. Jacob writes this with both tact and accuracy.

**Jacob loved Rachel and he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter." And Laban said, "It is better that I should give her to you than give her to any other man. Stay with me."** [Gen. 29:18–19]

You've got to remember that Jacob has no real possessions; there is no promise that he will make Laban or Rachel rich. He is on the run from Esau, who, it would be thought, will receive the bulk of his father's inheritance. However, he is family. Laban might be able to do better, and then again he might not. What Laban says is very diplomatic, but he intends to extract his pound of flesh from Jacob. Jacob's proposal is reasonable. As a man who has nothing, he needs to bring something to the marriage. He brings sweat and labor to this marriage.

He does not say that he will work for seven days for Rachel, because that would be an insult to Rachel and to her father. Seven years is an awful long time, but Jacob is willing to work for Rachel that long. How many of us could wait that long and work that long for a woman? This shows a great deal of true love and devotion. Jacob waited. He had a great many faults, but he waited for his right woman until that time and was willing to wait and work seven years for her.

What appears to be the case is, Laban either does not have sons at this time, or his sons are very young. Therefore, his daughter Rachel is tending the flocks. Laban really needs someone onboard as a head shepherd. Now, off in the future, Laban's sons will come into the picture; and Jacob will be considered less of an asset at that point in time.

**So Jacob served seven years for Rachel; but they seemed but a few days because of the love he had for her.** [Gen. 29:20]

Undoubtedly the most romantic verse in the Bible, revealing great depth of emotion on the part of Jacob for Rachel. Today; if a man was willing to wait as Jacob did for his right woman, if a man, having found the woman of his dreams, was willing to work for seven years for her, to be faithful to her and to not have premarital sex with her; how many marriages would end in divorce? This is a commitment and dedication just about unparalleled in human history, and few, if any, contemporary examples can be found which are comparable.

Every male should reflect upon the example set by Jacob here and take it to heart. This is an honor and integrity which would make a marriage work. Jacob's eyes are on the future, as he works. He does not have Rachel. He does not get to marry her first and then work seven years. The impatience and the demands of the typical male today are pathetic by comparison. When a woman (or a man) has character, he should show this passage to her (or, his) fiancée. The concept of faithfulness and waiting and commitment and dedication should be discussed at this point. If you could not wait as did these two, then you should not marry—you have either got the wrong person or you lack the character and integrity which will preserve and prosper your marriage. We again will see similar dedication when we study Hosea.

As Thieme said many times, *the key to marriage is not finding the right person; the key to marriage is being the right person.* As I write this, our country is being destroyed within by the instability of the institution of marriage and the lack of real commitment from either party. Over 50% of marriages are ending in divorce<sup>79</sup>; those who live together and then marry have even a higher failure rate; and those who simply live together have a higher failure rate yet. Only spiritual maturity, which comes by growth in God's Word, can rescue the pitiful state to which we have fallen. Preferably this should take place before the marriage and not after.

---

<sup>79</sup> This statistic is challenged; so I throw it out there by way of illustration.

Jacob has a great many faults; and these are often emphasized (and rightly so). However, there are some good attributes which he has as well. He is a hard and honest worker (as we will find out); and he is a faithful man in marriage.

**Then, Jacob said to Laban, "Give my wife; for my time is completed; that I may go in to her."**  
[Gen. 29:21]

This verse and vv. 23–25 tell us that Jacob and Rachel did not have sexual relations prior to marriage. They waited, although, living under the same roof for seven years, they certainly would have had some opportunity. Now, during that time, Laban has not married off Leah and he has done quite well having Jacob work for him. Jacob's dedication toward Rachel resulted in the fact that he worked hard for Laban. He had some good qualities, which are finally coming out.

Unfortunately for Jacob, Laban is even more devious than Jacob is. There appears to be almost a genetic predisposition toward this which came through his mother Rebekah; and this trait will now be seen in Laban.

**So Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. But it came to pass in the evening that he took Leah, his daughter, and brought her to him [Jacob] and he went into her. And Laban gave Zilpah, his maid, to her, to Leah, to be her maid.** [Gen. 29:22–24]

This feast would involve some drinking and it would have been completely dark when Leah was brought to Jacob. Leah would have been a part of this duplicity. She was not the one who concocted this plan, but she was certainly in collusion with her father. She needed only to say a word to Jacob—just one word, and he wouldn't have consummated their marriage. Jacob was not in love with her. Now she and Rachel would be similar in form and their fragrance would be similar. In the dark, since Jacob had not slept with Rachel, he would not be able to tell the difference.

Now, you will note that there is a big feast here offered by Laban. He is not a generous man. This may be customary; however, since he pulls this switch on Jacob, my thinking is that he wanted a whole lot of witnesses to the fact of the marriage. It is likely that neither sister is around for the feast. There may have been some drinking which occurred as well, with Jacob being encouraged to imbibe (I say this as an educated guess; we do not find it in the Hebrew text).

Before Jacob wakes up and realizes what has happened, we are told that Laban gives Leah this maid. Now what is that all about? Laban realizes that Leah may not be a 100% willing participant so perhaps he has sweetened the pot. She gets to marry Jacob (and you know there has to be some sibling rivalry and some jealousy on her part—after all, few men would have waited seven years as Jacob did) and, as long as she goes through with this, she has her very own, personal maid. Laban is covering all the bases here. Laban has become a wicked, despicable man, whose duplicity even exceeds that of his sister Rebekah and nephew Jacob.

There is a perverse poetic justice here, sad in that it exploits with Jacob's love for Rachel, yet apropos for someone like Jacob. He has met his match in his uncle Laban and can see the extent of the destructiveness which occurs when one is devious and underhanded. Above and beyond all of this, God's plan will carry on, with a perfection that defies human comprehension.

**And when morning came to pass, behold, it was Leah. Then Jacob said to Laban, "What is this that you have done to me? For Rachel I served with you; why then have you deceived me?"**  
[Gen. 29:25]

Jacob had no qualms about deception, as long as he was the one who did the deceiving. When he was deceived, he was rather offended by it. After all, he had the most intimate contact with Leah that he possibly could have. He is caught in a morality which is unbreakable. He has slept with Leah. Nothing else matters. Later in the Mosaic Law, it was mandated that when you sleep with someone, that is the end of it; you are instructed to marry that person. The Mosaic Law is very clear on that. As Paul said, the Gentiles have the Law of God written in their

hearts and here is a place where that is revealed. Jacob is now committed to a life with Leah. She and Laban were both a part of this deception. Laban kills two birds with one stone—he marries off his oldest daughter, gets seven years of excellent labor in the meantime; and, once all is said and done, he will receive another seven years of hard labor from Jacob. How ironic that Jacob should be faced with someone even more deceptive than he and Jacob fell for it. It blind-sided Jacob. This is a twist that he did not even see coming.

Apparently, I forgot to do the rest of this chapter. :)

---

---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 30** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 30

### Genesis 30:1–43

#### Outline of Chapter:

Vv. 1–8	Jacob's sons through Rachel's maid Bilhah
Vv. 9–13	Jacob's sons through Leah's maid Zilpah
Vv. 14–21	Leah bears a fifth and sixth son then a daughter.
Vv. 22–24	Rachel bears Jacob a son
Vv. 25–34	Jacob attempts to sever ties with Laban
Vv. 35–43	Laban's duplicity; still God blesses Jacob

#### Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

V. 42	<a href="#">Why God Blessed Jacob</a>
V. 42	<a href="#">Carol Summarizes Genesis 30</a>
V. 42	<a href="#">Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30</a>
V. 42	<a href="#">The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp</a>

**Introduction:** Genesis 30 is actually two chapters: a list of Jacob's sons born to him while working for Laban are given (excluding 4 who have already been born); and then the agreement between Jacob and Laban is explored, post-14 years (the time that Jacob worked in order to fulfill his obligations to Laban).

Chapter 30 will give us the remainder of Jacob's family, including those children which are borne on Rachel's behalf by their maids. Finally, she will bear one son, the one who would be greatest of the eleven sons (it will be several chapters until the twelfth son is born).

Jacob and Laban decide upon mutually agreed upon split of the cattle and substance which has been the increase of Laban's wealth due to Jacob. It will no longer be, "Tell me what you believe is right" but a careful negotiation. Laban will attempt to exert the upper hand, but Jacob will be more careful and less naive in their business dealings.

At first, there may seem to be little which connects these two disparate halves of Genesis 30; but in Gen. 30:1, Rachel appears, at first, to be confused about basic biology (she isn't). However, at the end of the chapter, we will find out that Jacob is very confused about biology—even superstitious. I say that as a 21<sup>st</sup> century man who has some understanding of biology and genetics (not much); however, I should not disparage Jacob's breeding methods too much (vv. 37–39)—although they do not work, it is at least worthwhile as an experiment. Many centuries passed before a better understanding of genetics was developed.

The only true difficulty in this chapter is, answering the many Bible critics who somehow believe that, because Jacob's breeding methods are recorded here in Scripture that they are somehow divinely inspired. What is recorded in the second half of this chapter is what Jacob did. It ought to be clear that, not everything that Jacob does has God's seal of approval.



### Jacob's Sons Through Rachel's Maid Bilhah

**When Rachel observed that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister and she said to Jacob, "Give me children; if not, I will die." [Gen. 30:1]**

Strife such as this brings on irrational behavior. Undoubtedly, she and Jacob have had sexual relations all along and she has not conceived. This is not a problem of Jacob's and she cannot demand from Jacob children. Her biological background is lacking here. If Leah can have Jacob's children, then Rachel's lack of offspring is not Jacob's fault. He can do nothing about it. Rachel will have to go to God and God will open her womb.

However, I believe that it would be a mistake to think of Rachel as being so naive as to put the actual blame on Jacob for not giving her children. She has something in mind here.

Note that what would seem to many men to be the ideal situation, being married to two sisters, is not an ideal situation. There was tremendous strife and suffering under Jacob's roof, something which he was drawn into continually. Leah was jealous of Jacob's devotion to her younger sister and Rachel was jealous of Leah's children. Some men marry, believing that means they will have sex on a regular basis, that it is automatic, no matter how they treat their wives, no matter what slobs they are. They have no idea as to who they marry, in most cases (even after living with a woman for years) and are very surprised by who pops out from behind that beautiful face and figure (women face the same problems). This is why men go to bars, go bowling, go hunting and camping with their friends. They did not marry someone that they even knew, and once they begin to find out who that person is, they are rather unhappy and discouraged. It is not because the woman they married is necessarily a bad person (save for her old sin nature, of course) but because they are ill-suited for one another. They focused on the externals; they had premarital sex before they were ready to commit to one another, and now both parties are miserable.

Jacob, faced with great variety (and even greater variety as this chapter unfolds) with respect to women, is not overjoyed in this multiple marriage. It is not a great life for him. He faces daily tension and strife. All the wonderful sex in the world cannot make up for that. And even though it is never mentioned, there is normal jealousy that would erupt when he sleeps with one wife over the other or has sex with one wife instead of with the other. Jacob did not choose for this to happen. What happened to him occurred because he was deceived, just as he had deceived his brother Esau.

Furthermore, the existence and the Biblical recording of this multiple marriage does not sanctify a multiple marriage. Under progressive revelation, it was not told to man directly that multiple marriage was unacceptable to God, although it was implied. God did not bring Adam a harem; he brought Adam his right woman. Jacob was not in love with his wives or mistresses; he was in love with Rachel. The strife which is revealed in v. 1 is a result of Jacob living with two women, even though this was not completely of his own choosing. He is acting as honorably as the situation is allowing. I hesitate to say this, but the ideal situation may have been for Jacob to remain with Leah, not to marry Rachel, and to wait the situation out. He would remain faithful to Leah and, at some point in time, would have probably married Rachel after the death of Leah. God would have worked things out. However, being as much in love with Rachel as he was, Jacob emotionally felt as though he had no other options; as did Adam when Eve ate of the fruit and then offered it to him. Men are at their weakest when they are in love.

**Then Jacob's anger against Rachel was kindled and he said, "Am I in place of God, Who has withheld from you fruit of a womb?" Then she said, "Here is my maid, Bilhah; go in to her that she may give birth upon my knees that I may have children through her." [Gen. 30:2-3]**

The continuation of mental attitude sins, including great seething jealousy, results in bad decisions. Jacob, the harried husband, just does not want to make trouble. It is difficult for him with Rachel and Leah; he is frustrated, he does not know how to calm his wives' anger toward one another. In his frustration and inability to deal with the situation, Jacob is open to doing anything, no matter what his wife asks. It is an unfortunate and weak state for any man to be in. What Rachel is asking for is common during those times; the maid is used as a surrogate, if

you will, for the children of the woman when the woman cannot bear children herself. However, bringing one more woman into this situation is not the solution to Rachel's barren womb.

Bear in mind that, in all of this human interaction, God's will is brought to fruition. Many times in Jacob's life, it will be hard to pinpoint anyone making a fully honorable decision—and yet, God's will always comes to pass.

**So she gave him Bilhah, her maid, as a woman, and Jacob went in to her. The Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged me and He has also heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore, she called his name Dan.** [Gen. 30:4–6]

Dân (דָּן) [pronounced *dawn*] is the active participle of *to judge*. In Rachel's mind, God carefully considered her situation and, even though her womb was closed, He gave a child to her maid. Therefore, God judged Leah and the overall situation, and then blessed Rachel. However, the tribe of Dan is a prominent failure of the tribes, not mentioned in the listing of the tribes of Israel in revelation and Jacob, in prophesying their future, called Dan a serpent in the way. It is possible that the false prophet comes from the tribe of Dan.

**And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again and bore a second son to Jacob. Then Rachel said, "With wrestlings of God I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.** [Gen. 30:7–8]

Occasionally in Scripture, El, Elohim or Yahweh are used as adjectives similar to our word *divine*. Some of these are used by the Holy Spirit as in the case of *the sons of God* in Gen. 6 and Job 1 to denote angels (who are created beings from the hand of God and not conceived from other angels). Other times this use of God's name is rather casual, bordering on a profane use, as it is here. Rachel is just feeling sorry for herself and almost without reason. Her direct quote of *wrestlings of God* shows a flair for the dramatic, out of proportion to the reality of the situation.

Naphtali means *wrestling* because Rachel saw herself in a struggle with her sister over all these years (how awful to feel as though you are in competition with your sister for most or all of your life. And what made it worse is that Leah, during her last birth, finally became relaxed about the situation. They both had something that the other did not. Rachel had the love of Jacob and Leah had his sons. Both focused on what the other one had and what they did not have. Naphtali, born of Bilhah, was practically never mentioned again in Scripture. As a person, he did not stand out and no one who was anyone in the Old or New Testament came from the loins of Naphtali (not knowingly, anyway).

The correct way to deal with this is for Jacob and Rachel to wait on God for their children. Abraham when he finally believed God and waited on God, was greatly blessed. What he did to solve the problem earlier only helped to confuse the issue and to cause problems for later Israel.

Rachel and Jacob will do likewise. Now these are the tribes of Israel and God expected in eternity past for all of this to occur. However, this was not God's first choice. It is likely that all Jacob's children should come through Leah and Rachel.

### Jacob's Sons Through Leah's Maid Zilpah

**When Leah realized [lit., saw] that she had ceased bearing children, she took Zilpah, her maid, and gave her to Jacob as a woman. Then Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob and Leah said, "By good fortune" so she called his name Gad.** [Gen. 30:9–11]

How absolutely ridiculous! Leah had a relaxed mental attitude until she suddenly realized that she was no longer bearing children and that her sister may be gaining on her, in some fashion. So she does exactly what Rachel had done; she gave her maid to Jacob and Jacob, not having enough problems in his life, bows to her will and impregnates her maid. Jacob has been nagged into doing whatever these women want of him. Some men would think that this is a marvelous marriage to be in because they can only focus in on the occasional sexual escapade

and don't realize that the constant tension has reduced Jacob into a "Yes, ma'am" husband. Whatever his wives want, he strives to fulfil, in hopes of gaining just a few more hours of peace.

Gad means *good fortune*. Individually, we know absolutely nothing about Gad; he is just one of Jacob's sons, just less distinguished. His descendants as a whole are mentioned often in the Bible, but there are no significant individuals who are Gadites of whom I am aware.

**Zilpah then born a second son to Jacob and Leah said, "In my happiness, women will call me happy," so she called his name Asher. [Gen. 30:13]**

Asher means *happy* or *blessed*. He was the eighth son of Jacob. Alone, he is undistinguished, and there are none from his seed which are distinguished. The tribe as a whole had its ups and downs, receiving a marvelous blessing from Moses, but failing to ever take control of their portion of the land by defeating the Phœnicians. This son represents failure on the part of Leah. Leah, with her last son, seemed to have a handle on her position as a wife of Jacob and seemed to be able to deal with this. However, jealousy has again sprung up and she is meeting Rachel's act of jealousy (giving her maid to Jacob) tit for tat.

The way these sons have been born indicates that these were sequential births. First Leah had four children, then, Rachel, out of jealousy, gave her maid, Bilhah, to Jacob for two more children. Then Leah, jealous that her womb had been temporarily closed, gave her maid to Jacob to bear more children. This means that the time period that we are speaking of was a minimum of 6 years and a maximum of 14. This is all based upon Jacob first working 7 years for Laban in order to marry Rachel; and then working an additional 14 years after. For Leah to have 6 sons herself, all of this had to take place in no fewer than 6 years.

#### **Leah Bears a Fifth and Sixth Son Then a Daughter**

**In the days of the wheat harvest, Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Give me, I ask, some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away also my son's mandrakes?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight for the mandrakes of your son." [Gen. 30:14–15]**

First of all, you are wondering what are these mandrakes. These are some kind of fruit, sometimes identified with *love apples*, which are known for the aphrodisiac properties. There are differences in opinion as to exactly what modern-day plant is being referred to. Further, even if its reputation as a sexual stimulant is unfounded, 90% of sex is in the head anyway; so the mere suggestion of it to those already predisposed would be stimulating. What has happened is that these two women are killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. In their desire to have Jacob as their own, they have turned him into a meek man among them. Their gain is that he can be told what to do; however, their loss is his reduced sexual desire for them. Their constant bickering and jealousy would tend to cool any man's ardor, so what has happened is that Jacob is no longer having sex with either wife. They have robbed him of his authority (for which he is equally responsible) and that robs him of his masculinity. Usually what would happen is a woman will become bored and not stimulated by such a man; however, with Jacob, he is the one to provide them with children to receive a more favored status as a woman and with him (who is showing signs of being potentially very prosperous).

Note the female logic found in this passage. Leah has accused Rachel of taking away her husband! Jacob worked for seven years for Rachel and Leah was sent to his wedding bed in the dark and became his wife because they consummated their marriage, although Jacob did not know who it was. Leah supplanted Rachel in the beginning; and the narrative shows that she was a willing participant in the deception of Jacob. Even had she simply spoken, Jacob would have known who she was; but she did not speak during their entire wedding night. So Leah stole Jacob. So how could she possibly accuse Rachel of stealing her husband? She can do that because she is a woman.

Also notice who runs the show here. These women decide who Jacob will sleep with. Rachel calls the shots in that regard, mostly. With this many women, Jacob is no longer the aggressive male but he is the passive, *what-would-you-like-my-dear?* male. He has capitulated to peace at any price. It is clear by this verse that he will sleep with his own wife Leah only under the direction of his wife Rachel. What has happened is that Rachel and Jacob are no longer copulating; however, at the same time, she is not going to allow him to stray from her bedside without throwing a fit; so, in exchange for these mandrakes to awaken his desire, she will send him to the bed of Leah. Who's the man of the house? Rachel.

**When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. And God hearkened to Leah and she conceived and she bore to Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages [transliterated, *sachar*] because I gave my maid to my husband." So he called his name Issachar. [Gen. 30:16–18]**

Somehow, in Leah's mind, because she was generous enough to allow her maid to bear two sons of Jacob, she believed that God a blessing her by giving her another son. Note that this is not confirmed by the Bible. The extent of the inspiration of the Bible includes the fact that the quotations of the persons in the Bible are accurate recollections of what were said. Inspiration does not in any way indicate that any quotation found in the Bible is somehow seconded or authorized by God. This is Leah's idea thought up entirely on her own. God did not in any way indicate that this idea was doctrinally accurate.

Issachar as an individual and as a tribe was fairly undistinguished. His name is a combination of the Hebrew word for *man* and for *wages*. Hence he is a *man who has been paid for* (rather than a *hired man*). One of the few persons of note in this line was Deborah, of Judges 5, one of the few women who rose to power over the Jews during their days of severe apostasy following Joshua's tremendous leadership.

**Then Leah conceived again and she bore a sixth son to Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me [even] me with a good dowry. Now my husband will honor me because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. [Gen. 30:19–20]**

Zebulun's name probably has a dual significance. There are a lot of plays on words throughout Genesis, especially with regard to the names of individuals; and a similar Hebrew word means *to bestow* and a similar, probably Akkadian word, means *to honor*. So Leah called Zebulun both a gift and something which reveals God's honor for her. Little is known about Zebulun and one of the very few to have come from the tribe of Zebulun is the almost unknown judge Elon, of Judges 12.

**Afterwards, she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah. [Gen. 30:21]**

Certainly unpopular with so-called liberated women is the part that women play in the Bible. Only one female child of Jacob is mentioned here (and she is possibly his only female child). It is not unusual for the Bible to list most of the sons and few if any of the daughters of some families. Nor is it unusual for the Bible to list the names of the sons but not the names of the daughters. Here, it is possible that Jacob had other daughters; however, Dinah is mentioned because an incident later on in Genesis will reveal the character and predisposition of Reuben and Levi.

Women play a prominent part in the Bible, yet different from the parts that men play. This should not be a cause for concern. There is no stereo typing, per se. God just has a place for men and a place for women. Some people, particularly those who are frustrated with life in general, do not like the pre-defined roles which God has assigned to men and women in general. They further do not like that these roles exist across almost every society and nation, with very few exceptions. They further place the blame upon the physical strength of man and the child-bearing characteristic of the woman and claim that we evolved that way. There was no evolving to it. God set up our roles, based upon the way that Adam and Eve were created and upon the way tht they sinned, and that is that. If you are born with red hair, you have got red hair and that is all there is to it. If you are born 5'10" tall, then that's all there is to it. A kid who is 5'5" may play a lot of basketball in 5-8th grade, but his basketball career

is going to wain once he reaches high school. It is not a matter of right or wrong; it just is what is true. A person with an IQ of 85 might have dreams of becoming a doctor or the president, but sometime around high school or earlier, these dreams will be discovered to be just that. It is not a matter of right or wrong; that is just the way things are. These are givens n your life. The male and female roles are also givens in life. Some men do not like to have the authority and many women do not like being under authority. However, it is the great safeguard to marriage. A woman can easily surmise whether she should marry a man or not by determining, not is she in love with him or if she is attracted to him, but can she submit to his authority for the rest of her life. If the answer to that question is a resounding **no**, then she has got the wrong man. If she is unsure, then she needs to wait and find out. When considering marriage, this ought to be the foremost question in a woman's mind—can I obey this man? Am I willing to submit to him? If she is not, then it is time to break things off in order to save both of you a life of heartbreak and frustration.

None of this implies inferiority of women on any level. In the gospels, the disciples, with the exception of John, are portrayed as fools whereas the women who followed our Lord are seen as much more spiritually mature. You, the reader (or hearer) may not realize that the disciples are such fools, but that only means that you have not had the gospels properly explained to you. Time and time again, the actions of the disciples cause one to wonder, *could they be any stupider?* None of the actions of the women in the gospels ever inspires such thinking.

### **Rachel Bears Jacob a Son**

**Then God remembered Rachel and hearkened to her. So God opened her womb and she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has removed my reproach." So she called his name Joseph, saying, "May Yahweh add to me another son." [Gen. 30:22–24]**

As we have seen with Noah, God did not forget about Rachel. To her, a somewhat emotional female with a flair for the dramatic, it seemed as though God had completely forgotten about her. This is an anthropopathism where the actions of God are explained to us in language of accommodation. God, in eternity past, billions of years before Rachel was born, decreed the exact right time for her to give birth to Joseph. His timetable was not her timetable; therefore, she felt as though God had forgotten her.

Joseph is the man that we have been waiting for. Joseph is the first spiritually mature person in Abraham's line to come along. Isaac attained some spiritual maturity and Jacob will also, and both of them recorded God's Word. However, Joseph is light years ahead of them spiritually. He comes from a family that believes in Yahweh and he seized the opportunity to grow spiritually.

In Hebrew, his name is Yôwçêph (יֹסֵף) [pronounced *yo-SAFE* (or, possibly, *yow-SAFE*)]. As has possibly become apparent to many of you, there is no *J* in Hebrew. That is, there is no Joseph, no Jacob, no Joshua, no Jeremiah, etc. Their names often begin with h's or y's. Yôwçêph means *to add, to increase*. Even though the Law of Moses had not yet been established, it would soon be that the first-born would be entitled to the double-portion. Joseph, not as the first-born physically, but as possibly the first-born spiritually (and certainly, the first spiritually mature person in Jacob's family) will receive the double-portion that would have normally gone to unstable Reuben. At some point in the next few chapters, it will probably be Joseph who will take up the pen and for all intents and purposes, finish the book of Genesis. He will write one of the greatest portions of Genesis.

### **Jacob Attempts to Sever Ties with Laban**

**And it came to pass when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away that I may go to my own home and to my own country." [Gen. 30:25]**

Jacob is beginning to recognize that he has a destiny and has a place in God's plan and it is not with Laban. God has given Jacob the land of Palestine and that is where he is to dwell. It is just as though he suddenly awoke and realized that God had promised him a great many ancestors and also promised him the land so now it is time to get on with it. In terms of time, over 6 years have passed since Jacob married Rachel and 20 years have passed

since he moved in with Laban and company. Jacob is seeking an honorable way to move away, yet he knows that Laban can be duplicitous.

**"Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go, for you know the service which I have given you." [Gen. 30:26]**

Jacob has more than earned his keep from Laban. He was worked for at least 20 years and Laban has been greatly prospered. Laban married his daughters and it cost him very little. He does not want to lose Jacob. What he will say will be surprising.

**And Laban said to him, "If I have found grace in your eyes—I have learned by divination that Yahweh has blessed me because of you." Then he said, "Designate your wages for me and I will give it." [Gen. 30:27–28]**

Some exegesis must be dispensed with first. We find in v. 27 ellipsis of the latter clause—that is, we find the *if* but we do not have a *then*. Context should be clear enough to supply the apodosis. The full thrust of this verse is, *if I have found grace in your sight, remain with me and listen to my offer for your wages*. Laban recognizes that he has been blessed because of Jacob, therefore would like Jacob to remain with him; and is willing to pay for somewhat of a raise.

God spoke to people in all kinds of ways prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, which has caused some confusion today. No one today hears the voice of God. We do not need to. His plan for our lives is so perfect that all we need is His Word and not only do we have guidance, but we have maturity and our lives are a greater spiritual impact today than at any time in the past. We do not need dreams to tell us what we are thinking; we do not need astrologers to tell us how our lives will turn out; and we do not need the voice of God to tell us whether we should make a left or a right turn. God is so perfect and His plan is so perfect, that all we need is His Word properly explained to us and we can lead out lives in glory to Him.

However, back then, God spoke in an audible voice; He came to men in dreams, He operated by divination. Laban possible really does recognize that he has been blessed because of Jacob and that this blessing came from God. He sounds ready to give Jacob whatever Jacob wants and it sounds as though he intends to be fair. So Jacob is taken aback and is immediately on guard. He should be careful about trusting Laban.

**And he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared [lit., *been*] with me. For you had little before me and it has increased abundantly and Yahweh has blessed you wherever I turned [lit., *at my foot*]. But now, when will I also provide [lit., *do*] for my household [lit., *house*]?" [Gen. 30:29–30]**

It should be obvious that Jacob is not looking to provide anything for *his house* but for his family and household. This is a metonymy<sup>80</sup> where the Hebrew word which is properly translated *house* actually refers to his family and household.

What has been happening for the past two decades is that Jacob has been providing for Laban's household yet Jacob now has two wives, two mistresses and 11 children, yet he is still under slave labor to Laban. Laban recognizes this, but did not want to lose Jacob if at all possible. He also apparently recognizes that he has been blessed by God to a great extent because of Jacob (although I tend to be suspicious of anything that Laban says and Jacob probably is also).

**And he said, "What shall I pay [lit., *give*] you?" Jacob said, "You will not give me anything. If you will do for me this thing, then I will again feed your flock and keep it. Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled sheep and spotted and every black lamb [from]**

---

<sup>80</sup> When one word stands for another concept, it is called a metonymy

**among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats—and such will be my wages."**  
[Gen. 30:31–32]

Jacob has obviously thought about this for sometime. He knows how Laban has deceived him in the past and he wants to devise wages which are fair and equitable and cannot be tinkered with by Laban. Jacob is going to cull all the second-rate sheep and goats from Laban's herds as his recompense.

**"So my integrity shall answer for me later when you come concerning my wages which [are set] before you. Everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs with me shall be counted stolen." Then Laban said, "Observe, let it be as you have said."**  
[Gen. 30:33–34]

Laban is able to make a quick decision. The wages which are requested seem reasonable and they are easily verifiable.

Jacob mentions integrity and there is some possibility that he has grown spiritually over the past two decades. He has been under pressure from his two wives and two mistresses and that can sometimes send a man either to the bar or to God's Word. We do not know the form that the Bible was in at that time, whether both he and Isaac had a copy or what. So far we have seen little by way of appearances by God in their lives. He has been there, but in order to manifest Himself to anyone, that person, generally speaking, must be mature.

Some people have trouble understanding that there are figures of speech in the Bible. The concept of inspiration is that the writers of Scripture record God's Words using their own vocabulary, own feelings and thoughts and their own figures of speech. We all use figures of speech, even the most literal of us. Here it is obvious. A human action is ascribed to the noun *integrity*. Integrity will not speak or have a conversation with anyone or anything. This figure of speech is called a somatiopoeia [pronounced *SO-mat-o-PAE-ia*]. *Soma* comes from a Greek word meaning body, and this figure of speech is when a human action or attribute or feeling has a human function like speaking attributed to it. That is, this human action, attribute or feeling has a body ascribed to it along with the functions of the body, such as speaking.

### **Laban's Duplicity; Still God Blesses Jacob**

**But that day, he [Laban] removed the male goats that were striped and spotted and the female goats that were speckled and spotted and everyone that had white on it and every black among the lambs and put [them] in the charge [lit., hand] of his sons. And he proscribed a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob. So Jacob fed the flock of Laban that remained.**  
[Gen. 30:35–36]

We find that Laban, despite what he said, is not to be trusted. He immediately culls out the very sheep, goats and lambs which are to be Jacob's wages and places them with his own sons for safekeeping. He knows enough about genetics to know that if Jacob is taking care of a group of sheep and goats which are all white then those born to this flock are likely to be all white, and therefore will remain with Laban. So that Jacob could not easily retrieve this sheep and goats, Laban made certain that it would take three days for Jacob to get to Laban's flocks attended to by his sons.

Laban is still an underhanded, conniving son-of-a-bitch. His wealth is dependant upon Jacob. God has blessed Laban and his family because of Jacob (and because of Abraham), but Laban wants to insure that he will have the lion's share of blessing. Goats do not easily change their spots.

**Jacob then took rods of fresh poplar and almond and plane and peeled in them white streaks, exposing the white of the rods. He placed the rods which he had peeled in front of the troughs, even in the watering troughs) where the flocks came to drink right before the flocks, since the females of the flocks bred when they came to drink.** [Gen. 30:37–38]

This was a little mumbo jumbo, hocus pocus on his part. What Jacob did would not influence the breeding of these sheep. He obviously thought that it did. However, God, seeing that Jacob had been swindled once again by Laban, honored this and saw to it that the flocks all put out spotted and speckled sheep and goats, according to the laws of heredity. This will be recognized by Jacob in his own testimony in Gen. 31:9: "In this way, God has taken away the cattle of your father."

**And the flocks bred in front of the rods and so brought forth the striped, speckled and spotted flocks. And the lambs, Jacob separated and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. And it was whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, that Jacob laid before the eyes of the flock in the troughs that they might breed among the rods. But for the feebler of the flock, he did not lay them there and so the feebler [were] Laban's and the stronger [were] Jacob's.** [Gen. 30:39–42]

Victor Bravo's theory: *My pet theory is that Jacob was an ace cattle breeder and he herded the best animals together. . . . but he used the sticks to make it look like magic to the poor observers dispatched by Laban. But, I acknowledge it is speculation. I grew up among cattle and sheep folk and it is amazing the mix of old-time superstition and cutting edge genetics you can find among them, even now.*<sup>81</sup>

Another comment on this from Rich: *We don't always have God providing a "voice over" in every event saying: "I endorse this behavior" or "I condemn this behavior".*<sup>82</sup>

Richard Wallach: *God had revealed to Jacob how to get the most from Laban's herds by asking for the dominant genes (marked animals) which would emerge in the offspring of the recessive gened animals (unmarked). This story shows that God knew about genetics before Mendel and revealed some of it to Jacob. See Genesis 30:32 and 31:10-12. Jacob didn't have full confidence in God's plan and decided to try to help it along with some primitive ideas of his own.*<sup>83</sup>

What Jacob is doing is not right either. It is one underhanded move to match Laban's underhanded move. His nature of deception comes out again. Jacob is attempting to breed this stock of goats and sheep so that the stronger ones are born spotted or speckled and are therefore Jacob's, and that the weaker ones are born all white and therefore would remain with Laban. His idea of how to do this was primitive and it would not work. However, God still blessed Jacob.

No matter what Laban does and no matter what Jacob does, God is going to bless Jacob.

### Why God Blessed Jacob

- ✘ Jacob was related to Abraham
- ✘ Jacob had grown somewhat
- ✘ Jacob had a son who would grow to be a spiritual giant.
- ✘ So God blessed him.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We should not over-think Jacob's doings in this passage. Jacob is a deceptive, charlatan by heart, and this is an attempt to get the most out of Laban's proposal. However, hasn't it ever happened to you that you did something which fell outside God's plan in order to get something, and God gave it to you anyway, despite the fact that we

<sup>81</sup> From <http://www.puritanboard.com/f40/jacob-spotted-sheep-genesis-30-25-43-a-56391/> accessed December 21, 2013.

<sup>82</sup> From <http://www.puritanboard.com/f40/jacob-spotted-sheep-genesis-30-25-43-a-56391/> accessed December 21, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> From <http://www.puritanboard.com/f40/jacob-spotted-sheep-genesis-30-25-43-a-56391/> accessed December 21, 2013.



tried for it apart from His provision? That is all that is occurring. God overrules the wicked that men do and still blesses some despite their evil intent. I am certain that there is someone who has bought a lottery ticket that God was going to bless with millions of dollars anyway, and gave the winning numbers to this person, despite the fact that he depended upon a lottery ticket rather than God for his increase.

There are people hearing or reading this right now who have bought lottery tickets with the thought, "Well here I am God, here is a perfect opportunity for You to bless me. Just bought the ticket and I am ready to spend the money." This is what Jacob is doing and God will bless him anyway (just as God has blessed him despite the efforts of Laban to take control of his wealth).

### Carol Summarizes Genesis 30

The best way that I can explain what I learned today is to paraphrase this passage, and try to explain what I think was going on between Jacob and Laban.

Jacob wants to take his family and go back to Canaan. Laban wants Jacob to stay, because Laban has become wealthy from the Lord blessing him on account of Jacob, and offers to pay Jacob if he (Jacob) will continue to be Laban's shepherd.

Note: Jacob has already worked for Laban for 14 years; 7 years to pay the wedding price for Rachel, and when Laban substituted Leah in Rachel's place, Jacob had to work another 7 years to pay the wedding price for the girl he wanted to marry all along. After 14 years of being Laban's shepherd, all Jacob had to show for his work was two wives, two concubines, eleven sons and one daughter!

Jacob agrees to work for Laban some more, under the condition that Laban pays him only in sheep and goats that are striped, spotted, and speckled - and that Laban does not pay Jacob with any of the flocks that he (Laban) already has. Jacob will be paid from the offspring of Laban's existing flocks, that were in Jacob's care.

Laban agrees to these terms, and then he (Laban) separates all the striped, spotted, and speckled animals from his herds. Laban gives these animals to his (Laban's) sons to care for, leaving only solid-colored animals for Jacob to watch. Laban also takes all the goats that had white in them, but were not solid white.

Then Laban moves all of his striped, spotted, and speckled animals a three-days journey away from Jacob, in order to eliminate the chance of any of Laban's striped, spotted, and speckled animals mating with the solid-colored animals in Jacob's care, and maybe producing striped, spotted, or speckled offspring (which would then be part of Jacob's wages).

Laban thought that he was being slick, that solid-colored animals would only produce solid-colored offspring. How was Jacob supposed to get spotted, striped, and speckled offspring from solid colored parents? Laban thought that striped, spotted, and speckled animals could only produce striped, spotted, and speckled offspring - and that solid-colored animals could only produce solid-colored offspring!

Jacob had told Laban that any solid-colored offspring in his (Jacob's) care would belong to Laban, and that Laban could even consider those solid-colored offspring to be stolen from him if he found any among the animals in Jacob's care. Not the first generation, but the later offspring. Jacob would only keep the striped, spotted, and speckled offspring from solid colored parents for himself.

Once Laban has gone away, Jacob peels sticks of wood to look like they were striped. I think that he did this in order to tell God what kind of offspring that he was hoping to get when the solid-colored animals in his care began mating.

Then Jacob made sure that he got the better of the deal by making sure that only the strongest of the animals

## Carol Summarizes Genesis 30

mated in front of the striped sticks, while the weak and puny animals did not have those sticks in front of them. This way, God continued to bless Jacob in an unlikely way, which ensured Laban could not rightly accuse Jacob of stealing from him (Laban), although Laban tried to do that in Chapter 31!

From <http://boldlyproclaimingchrist.wordpress.com/2011/12/03/jacob-laban-and-the-spotted-sheep/> accessed December 21, 2013.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

## Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

Laban's New Deal  
(30:25-36)

Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you." But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account." And he continued, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." But he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased to a multitude; and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?" So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: Let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen." And Laban said, "Good, let it be according to your word." So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks (Genesis 30:25-36).

The fourteen years of service for Leah and Rachel must have been fulfilled shortly after the birth of Joseph. Just as Jacob reminded Laban that it was time to take his wife (29:21), so he must seek his release so that he might return to his homeland and family. Several factors would have contributed to Jacob's desire to leave. First, his feelings toward Laban might not have been very positive at this point. He had been deceived, and his return had already been delayed seven years longer than he had expected. There certainly would have been a desire to return to his family. While we do not know if Rebekah was still alive, at least Isaac was. And, finally, God had revealed to him that he would someday return to the promised land where he would be blessed (28:10-22).

Having fulfilled his obligation to Laban, Jacob was free to go, but Laban was reluctant to see this happen. He had come to realize that his prosperity was the result of Jacob's presence (verse 27). If Jacob were to stay, Laban reasoned, it would be on the basis of the profit motive. All of Jacob's labor over those fourteen years had been in lieu of a dowry. He had nothing to show for his labor except for his wives and family. It was now time to re-negotiate Jacob's contract, and Laban asked him to name his terms.

Jacob was in no hurry to do this. He first strengthened his position by underscoring in Laban's mind the value he would be to him, just as it had been evident in the past (verses 29-30). Jacob now had a family to provide for, and thus his wages must be adequate to meet their needs. Jacob must think of the future. Laban's offer, he suggests, will have to be a good one.

## Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

Now that Laban is prepared to accept a hard bargain, Jacob names his terms. And frankly, Laban must have breathed a sigh of relief, for the request was one that was easy to accept. Normally goats in that land were black or dark brown, seldom white or spotted with white. On the other hand, the sheep were nearly always white, infrequently black or spotted.<sup>251</sup> Jacob offered to continue working as a tender of the flocks if he were but to receive the rarer of the offspring.

Jacob would examine the flocks that day, removing all the speckled and spotted animals, and these would be set aside as Laban's property. These animals would be taken three days' distance and kept by Laban's sons. Only those newly born spotted or striped would become Jacob's property. At some later time the herd would be examined, and the spotted or striped animals would go to Jacob, while the rest would be Laban's. Removing the spotted and striped which were in the flock benefited Laban in two ways. First, it left these animals to him, not Jacob. Also, it lessened the chances of other spotted or striped animals being conceived, since these would not be mating with the flock.

It was too good to be true, Laban must have thought. How could he possibly lose? However, it was an open-ended agreement, which encouraged Jacob to attempt to manipulate the outcome and also left God free to overrule the normal course of nature in order to bless Jacob. The agreement was solidified, and the flocks were divided, with Jacob tending the unspotted, unspotted, and unstriped animals of Laban.

Jacob's Wheeling and Dealing  
(30:37-43)

Jacob and Laban must both have departed while chuckling to themselves. Both thought the agreement was one that they could manipulate to their own advantage and at the expense of the other. Rather than conscientiously tending the flocks of Laban while looking to God for the increase, Jacob decided that this was something he could handle best by resorting to his schemes and devices. He employed three techniques which appeared to result in great success:

Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink. So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock. Moreover, it came about whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, that Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods, but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys (Genesis 30:37-43).

The first method Jacob used (verses 37-39) was peeled poles, which were supposed to have some kind of prenatal influence on the flocks. Jacob supposed that if the flocks had a visual impression of stripes while they were mating and conceiving, the offspring would assume this same form. So all about the trenches, which served as watering troughs, Jacob placed these peeled poles; and every appearance would incline him to believe that his scheme was working, for the resulting offspring were striped, speckled, or spotted (verse 39).

The second phase of Jacob's plan to predispose the outcome of his labors was to segregate the flocks. The striped, speckled, and spotted offspring (which belonged to Jacob) were put off by themselves. The rest of the flock was faced toward those animals which were either striped or all black (verse 40). While the peeled poles were artificial, the striped animals were the "real McCoy." Surely by seeing these animals, the rest of the flock would get the idea.

The third phase was a stroke of genius (verses 41-42). It was a kind of selective breeding. We are told that lambing took place twice during the year, once in the fall and once in the spring.<sup>252</sup> Those born in the fall were

## Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

thought to be hardier, since they must endure the harsh winter. Jacob placed his peeled poles only in front of the superior animals and not before the weaker. In Jacob's mind the result was that the strong animals went to him, while the weak went to Laban (verse 42).

From everything that has been said, we would naturally conclude that the great prosperity of Jacob (verse 43) was due to his shrewd techniques for manipulating the outcome of the mating of the flocks. So it would seem. So it seemed to Jacob. There is only one problem: it didn't work because it couldn't work. From a spiritual perspective, it did not work because God does not bless carnal effort. From a physical point of view all of Jacob's schemes were of no avail because they operated on one assumption, and that assumption was scientifically erroneous. Each of the three techniques Jacob employed was predicated on the belief that visual impressions at the time of conception affected the outcome at birth. In the first and third techniques it was the peeled poles which were thought to produce striped offspring. No one believes that this is true today, and no farmer uses this technique to upgrade his cattle. The second device of Jacob was based on the same premise, but it employed the black and striped of the flock to create the visual impressions.

Only later will we be told the real reason for Jacob's prosperity. But mark this well-Jacob did not prosper because he pulled one over on Laban. Jacob's success was not the product of his schemes.

There is more for the next chapter at this link.

From <https://bible.org/seriespage/jacob-gets-laban%E2%80%99s-goat-genesis-3025-3116> accessed December 21, 2013.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The scientific explanation

### The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

From: JASA 3 (June 1951): 16-21.

Editor's Introduction: The following paper was the occasion of considerable comment at the convention, It represents a biochemical approach to a problem which has previously been considered only from the biological point of view, For a good statement of the latter case the reader is referred to an article on this subject by Professor Van Haitsma of Calvin College entitled "The Supplanter Undeceived."

Author's Introduction:

Up to this present time, I had hoped arrangements could have been made to attend the Convention and read my paper in person, and then participate in any discussion that might arise. However it does not seem possible now for me to be present. I would be happy to answer by mail any questions arising., in fact it often appears that the real fruit of "papers" is evidenced in the discussion that follows. Surely anything that we can say that would lead to a more carefully searching of the Scriptures is praiseworthy. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.," Proverbs 25:2

Last week a friend of mine sent me the book "I Have Loved Jacob" by Joseph Hoffman Cohn,,D.D. (1948). Dr. Cohn takes exception to the prevalent misrepresentation of Jacob and states "Why to he not known as the Bible really presents him?" "The Birthright.," "The Blessing from Isaac" and "Life with Unkle Laban" are some of the opening chapters, I am happy that In my paper the highlights of Jacob's life are quoted direct from the Scriptures. However Dr, Cohn states on Page 51 that "The Angel of the Lord told Jacob to use the rods, to test his faith and obedience, And so Jacob took sticks from the trees and peeled them like peppermint sticks. These rods he laid down in the troughs, so when the cattle cam to drink they would gaze upon these striped sticks.

## The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

But Laban could laugh at him, because Laban knew that the science of husbandry had proven that the color of the animals was determined by heredity and not by environment. But God had a law superior to the science of husbandry and we read a remarkable statement in Genesis 30:39--"the flocks conceived before the rodeo and brought forth cattle rigstraked, speckled and spotted." Then the dream mentioned in Genesis 31:11-12 is quoted.

In my approach I have used the chemistry of the pilled, or bruised, rods as one factor, and their employment at specific times as the resultant factor. in 30:41 the rods were laid in the gutters, and in 30:42 they were not put in. This follows the Scriptural account of the method. The dream which was told to: Rachel and Leah in Chapter 31 reveals that the angel of God knew his plans were meeting with success., but there is no Scriptural evidence that the angel of God told Jacob to use this method--in fact the dream terminates with "Now arise, get thee out from this land." (31:13). Away from heathen surroundings, just as God told Abraham In 12:1\$ "Get thee out of thy country.

I have just read Vol. 2. No. 3., and I got a blessing to see CHRIST preeminent in the midst and prevailing in all the papers, Would that our books of science in our schools and colleges followed such a pattern.

Laban and Jacob's Wage Agreement: "The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lambs Shall Be My Wages"

"It shall greatly helps ye to understand Scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken or wrythen., but of whom, and to vhom, with vhat words.. at vhat time) where., and to what intent, with what circumstances., considering what goes before and what follows."

Myles Coverdale

The highlights of Jacob's life from birth to his marriage to Laban's daughters to quoted here direct from the Scriptures for authenticity and to indicate the significance of the marks he selected to brand his wages,

Jacob is introduced in Genesis 25:26 as a twin born after his brother, but "with his hand on Esau's heel." This was a sign to conform a previous declaration made by the Lord Jehovah., "the elder shall serve the younger." (25:23). "And his name was called Jacob, Ya 'agob." (25:26). "ya" for Jehovah and "agob" for heel or supplant--supplanted by Jehovah. An example of Divine Election before birth as stated in Romans 9:11y120 together with a confirming sign at birth. Jacob was smooth not hairy like his brother.. and was loved by his mother. (25:28; 27:11).

Esau was born as a red or ruddy child covered with hair (like a goat-25:25), Esau., Edom and Seir are three news descriptive of these details--Esau "covered with.," Edom. "red" and Seir "hairy as a rough goat." He was probably larger and stronger than his brother Jacob., and became a cunning hunter and a man of the field. Esau was loved by his father because of Isaac's fondness for gamy meat. (25:28)

The birthright. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a morsel of meat and bound the transaction with an oath before partaking of the food. (25:33). Esau did not tell his father that he had sold his birthright and was therefore not entitled to the blessing, but after his mother's deceptive plan gained the blessing for Jacob.. he said "Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing.0 (27:36). Thus Esau was rightly called "profane" In Hebrews 12:16 in the light of Nu. 30:2 where "profane" is ascribed to one who breaks his word. He did not intend to surrender his birthright even to the point of murder. (27:41).

Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife was barren; the Lord answered, and Rebekah his wife conceived. (25:21). For this he should have been very thankful to the Lord and hearkened to the declaration and sign of Divine Election. He blessed Jacob thinking it was Esau but when Esau subsequently arrived and sought the blessing,

## The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

he said, "Yea, and he (Jacob) shall be blessed." (27:33). The prominent position of rood was replaced by the sovereignty or the Lord Jehovah.

Rebekah the mother (and Laban's sister) was told by the Lord that the struggle within her womb was due to twins of different nations and that the elder shall serve the younger, But overhearing Isaac's plan to bless Esau (27:7) she contrived to switch brothers deceiving him in his blindness or darkness. Jacob feared a curse would follow instead of a blessing if the deceptin was found out, but his mother ordered him to. obey her,, and said "Upon me be thy Curse,, my son: only obey my voice." (27:13). Rebekah covered the smooth white skin of 'ojacoble arms and chest with black goat hair and gave him a dish of savoury goat, meat to present to his father for the blessing; and Jacob was blessed above Esau,. (27:29).

Laban agreed to accept Jacob's proposition. "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter." (29:18,1,9). After the wedding feast, and in the darkness of the night, Laban switched sisters--he slipped the eldest daughter Leah in bed with Jacob, and thus the marriage with Leah was consummated. The "black sheep" of the family was substituted for Rachel's with a traditional custom given i.e., as an excuse. Thus Laban became "profane" because he broke his word according to the Agreement,

"The Jews Require A Sign" (I Cor. 1:22)

In view of Jacob's past experience with Beau and Laban, he decided to negotiate an agreement with visible evidence to mark his agreed-upon possessions. This he believed would remove any reflection upon his honesty when the time arrived for him to collect his wages. (30:33). But later the wickedness of Laban was revealed when he discerned the great number of Jacob's marked animals and he sought to murder him, employing as an excuse the theft of his daughters unawares and the Images which Rachel had stolen, but which was unknown to Jacob.

### The History Of Melanism

One of the papers presented at the American Chemical Society at San Francisco., March 27 to April 1. 1949, bore this title by Drs. J. and M.L. Dufrenoy. They have sent me a complimentary copy of their pamphlet (in French) entitled "From Genesis to the Atomic Bomb,""Livery flock has its black sheep.," "It is recorded in Genesis that Jacob was successful in breeding Black sheep from white sheep and rams, which, as we now know white to be dominant in sheep., may have been heterozygotous." A list of 309 publications is enumerated in the bibliography from 1591 to 1949. And stating that "to account for the occasional birth of 'black babies' among white folk, and for the occurrence of 'white negroes,1 Maupertuis formulated laws of heredity, antedating Mendels by a century." "About 1850., melanin was recognized as a pigment, produced in special cells (chromatophores) and bound to a sulfur-containing protein; however, the biochemistry of melanin could not be elucidated before the significance of oxidases had been revealed by G. Bertrand (1896) and that of sulfhydryl. groups, suspected by ReyPailhade (IW6)., had been established by Hopkins.

Melanin (Gr. "melee" black) Is the pigment or negro skin distributed in the more superficial layers, in contrast to the pigment or the white races which is round principally in the basal cells. In the white races the taming due to sunburn and its subsequent disappearance reveals a reversible reaction.. in contrast with the negro which is irreversible. It is also a pathological pigment associated with tumors and the blood in melanaemia. It is also present in the alkaline black ink of the squid which turns Into brown sepia when neutralized with an acid., as for instance Hydrochloric. In hair and in wool It is present in the medulla only in white fibers,, and in brown or black hair or wool the outer cells are impregnated. Tyrosine, tryptophan and phenylalanine produce melanin-like compounds upon irradiation with ultraviolet light by an oxidation-reduction system, "The normal pigmentary alterations observed in developing or aging cells, those alterations associated with physiological changes or sex hormones., or the pigmentary disturbances associated with pathological conditions are but visible evidence of a change in the oxidation-reduction potential of melanogenic centers in the cell." (Frank H. Figge 1940)..

## The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

Black in the Jacob-Laban episode to from the Hebrew word "chum" associated with a burnt" color in connection with the word "cham" which has been translated Ham. Ham's eldest son Cush was named "kush" which is derived from the Sumerian ,word "kus" for skin, and Kushly is translated Into "Ethiopian" from the Gree " aithiops"--burnt face. This reminds us of Jer, 13:23; "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Leopard to a combination word of "leo" the yellow lion and "pard" the black panther as a symbol also of an unholy alliance--the lion a symbol of the sunlight and the black panther a symbol of the dark unknown after death, the Egyptian priests in death-rite ceremonies wore a black panther skin.

### Jacob's Specific Plan For Breeding Numerous Marked Animals

" And Jacob took branches of fresh white birch, and of benzoin and laurel, pilled white strokes in them., and set them in the gutters in the watering troughs whenever black and white animals were paired at the water-trough, but not for solid-colored pairs."

"Maqqelah Lach Libneh" generally translated as rods of green poplar should be rendered as branches of fresh white (birches).

"Luwz generally translated as hazel, means "light" -- "luz" in Spanish and Portuguese, and "luxus" in Latin. A substance used for lighting as incense.

"Armown is generally translated as "chestnut tree" means "noble" and should be rendered Laurel as Laurel nobilis or Ndbble Laurel or Bay.

The pilling of rods and white strakes referred to here., can be better understood as a white gummy substance produced only when branches above referred to are bruised, particularly the younger branches and: when fresh in the spring of the year.

The white birch exudes a juice having a sweet and somewhat acidulous taste) and the bark contains a camiphoraceous body "betulin." The oil of birch has been used externally for skin diseases and internally for relief in venereal diseases. The fresh leaves are used to form a bed in which rheumatic patients lie, and which excites profuse sweating. The white birches grow in groves which reminds us of the groves of Baal and Ashtaroth sex worship.

The noble Laurel was sacred to Apollo who was supposed to be over the flocks and herds to ward off plaguesp also used for garlands by Greekwictori, The Oil of Baysp or noble laurel., has been used as an external stimulant,

Benzoin (luwz)."-'. The literature on this article reveals some very startling information. "Many centuries old., this substance was called 'incense of Java,' the words for which In native tongue., were "luban Jawl.I. The first syllable was dropped and one word made out of the two, 'Banjavi)l which developed through oevoral minute linguistic changes to lbenjui., 'benzoi., 'benzoin' and 'benjamin.'" The "luban javi" or white gum from Java finally corrupted into "benzoin" and is ben yamin." The wild allspice or fever-bush is the bencoinc of Arabia and might have been the parent of the trees now in Java. Only a Bible student could properly understand influences in connection with the corruption of this name. It was near luz where the youngest son was born and named Ben-oni which means "son of my sorrow" by Rachel, and which was changed by Jacob to Ben-yamen "son of my right hand." Thus ben-oni was the origin of benzoin and ben-yamen of benjamin, Yamen means both right and south, for when facing the East the right hand points to the south. Even today Yemen in southern Arabia is known as the "Land of the Eight Hand" to distinguish it from Syria "The Left-hand Land." And the left hand as well as the north was generally regarded as evil or unknown. When the benzoin branch is bruised a white gum exudes In the form of tears. If is used as a general and local stimlant.9 tending to elimination by the mucous membranes.

Aromatic and camphoraceous substances as mentioned above at first are Aphrodisiacs and the knowledge of

## The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

their use was evidently known to Jacob from the heathen practices of Laban and the surrounding country. And Jacob used these substances to induce breeding when mixed pairs presented themselves at the watering trough.

"Stronger" translated from qesher" which means unholy alliance or mixture.. "Feeble" translated from "ateph" meaning covered over (Ps 65:13). Instead of "stronger" a better rendering would be "mixed colors" as black and white., and Instead of "feeble" a better rendering would be "solid colored."

Now to answer the final question--Did Jacob breed black or spotted animals from solid-colored ones perhaps by discovering the secret of emphasizing recessive traits? The maternal impression theory I believe comes from and belongs to mythology.

According to the agreement--first, all existing male and female spotted goats 'were removed,, and any that had some white in it (30:32,35). What remained could well have been solid white and solid black males and females. The solid white were perhaps in the minority in the north mountainous country and the black predominated--this would account for a minor portion of spotted and speckled such as were present originally and removed. All subsequent spotted and speckled offspring were to belong to Jacob as his wages for tending to Laban's flocks and herds.

All the existing black or brown sheep were first removed and any subsequent so marked in the Offspring were to belong to Jacob. It is very interesting to note that only in 30:32..33.,35 is "sheep" translated from the Hebrew word "keseb". In other places "sheep" is translated from "toon" which name could include goats., as meaning "small grazing animals." The Levitical offerings can clarify this problem for In 3:6P 7, a peace offering is mentioned as a LAM, which can be either male or female., &nd the word "lambs" here has been translated from this same word "keseb." This would explain why the gender was mentioned in connection with the-goats and only implied In the sheep by a general name for both sexes. So the black sheep removed were lambs.. which would indicate that the adult black sheep remained. Here again the white sheep were evidently in the majority and the black ones in the minority--thus accounting for only' a small number of offspring which existed and were removed.

'This explanation should lift all confusion--heredity factors are unchangeable but mixtures as In crosses made deliberately can be accounted for. And of course there can be pathological changes and Individual changes with experimental substances--such as discovered in including Cobalt when feeding white sheep. But as stated in the Scripture everything produces after its kind and mixtures are-the products of man's experiments but not reproducible.

Jacob arrived at Leban's estate as a poor boy and left as a very rich men. His many children and the great increase in flocks and herds was due to the Lord Jehovah's blessing in withholding sickness and abort ion--"This twenty years have I been with thee; thy eves and thy she goats have not cast their young." (31:36).

Jacob's gift to Esau probably represented a number as a tithe and included she goats (oz), he goats (tayish) and ewes (rachel)p and rams (ayil)j etc. in the ratio of ten females for each male; mid very significantly an equal number of sheep and goats as the two different nations, But above all Jacob's animals were spotted, a symbol of the heathen practices Prevailing in Laban's country., and reminds us of Hosea 7:8. "Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people and is a cake not turned." When the true Scriptures are mixed with mythology the product is a half -baked philosophy.

Jacob deliberately crossed black and white animals by employing aphrodisiacs whenever they were paired at the watering trough, but withheld stimulants when solid-colored pairs were present. Thus the spotted offspring were greater in number then the solid-colored, type.



From <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1951/JASA6-51Schepp.html> accessed December 21, 2013 (with some editing).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Thus the man grew exceedingly rich and had large flocks, maidservants and menservants and camels and asses.** [Gen. 30:43]

Jacob left his homeland with essentially nothing, on the run from his brother, and God has prospered him greatly. There are all kinds of people out in Jacob's world who have worked hard and do not have anything to show for it. God has blessed Jacob. In visiting with a friend, we had both noticed that God had blessed us materially beyond what we could imagine and that this blessing seemed to be independent of the money that we made. God chooses whom to bless and whom to curse.

Furthermore, God's blessings are multifarious. Some people can only see wealth as a blessing and they miss the other tremendous provisions of God in their lives. Everyone has adversity and some do not see what God has provided, they see only their problems. And some people are not blessed with much of anything beyond logistical grace (the basic necessities are provided for). However, what your focus should be upon is God's Word. All these other things will be added to you, apart from the lottery, apart from financial planning, apart from the amount of worrying that you do. This is not the green light to go out and charge up your credit cards to their maximums (as Thieme said, that handles the 1% of the audience who just listen for that one sentence that they can take and distort beyond belief).

The emphasis should be in our life to eagerly search through His Word and to trust God implicitly with our lives. We do not need to even worry about blessing or cursing. Follow that advice and you may wake up some day, as I did, and realize that you have been blessed beyond your wildest dreams.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)**

**[External Links](#)**

**[Genesis Chapter Links](#)**

---

---

**Genesis 31** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

---

---

# Genesis 31

---

---

**Genesis 31:1–55**

**Jacob and Laban Split Up**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

v. 19 [Summary of the Doctrine of Teraphim](#)

**Introduction:** Chapter 31 begins with an interesting point of view. So far, when God has revealed himself to any Old Testament saint through a dream or a vision, we are told the story as though it is happening right at that moment (even if the writer is recounting it from years ago). However, here, God has spoken to Jacob, yet Jacob does not record but the barest bones information about the revelation. In fact, he records more of the revelation in the telling of it to his wives.

Let me suggest four possibilities: (1) Jacob did not act on God's guidance immediately; so he had the dream, and kind of set it aside; but when Jacob realized that Laban no longer favored him, that got him to thinking. (2) This does allow for the possibility that Jacob makes this up in order to cause his wives to leave Laban and their homeland; however, the entire dream, as presented, seems to ring true. (3) Jacob has a second dream, where God tells him again, "Leave." This would assume that Jacob sort of forget about his first dream and God having to return to him and say, "I really mean it this time." That simply does not sound right to me either. It is more likely that Jacob remembered the dream, but did not act upon it immediately. (4) The dream and Jacob's telling of the dream are close in time. He dreams the dream and the next day he tells his wives about it. This also seems unlikely, simply because Jacob's motivation appears to be more about Laban's treatment of him as opposed to God's directive in this chapter. This is a lot to throw out there, prior to studying the chapter itself, but it will give somewhat of a warning of what is coming.

When Jacob leaves, it is not under the best of circumstances. Laban and his sons are all turned against Jacob, so when Jacob surreptitiously leaves, Laban finds out and pursues him. While in hot pursuit, God speaks to Laban, to the intent, apparently, of calming him down prior to his catching up with Jacob.

Jacob also inadvertently has some images (household deities) with him which were stolen from Laban. The explanation concerning Laban's frantic behavior concerning these deities is explained through isagogics.

The interaction between Jacob and Laban is fascinating. Both men know what is the right and fair thing to do. Both men expect this from of the other but they will not act accordingly. In you business dealings and in your personal relationships, you cannot expect others to behave as they ought. I have been in a great many business deals that, when money becomes a part of the dispute, hard feelings and difficulties can result. I have made an attempt in every business interaction to try to place myself in the shoes of the other person, attempting the best I could to see it from their point of view. Certainly, many times, the motivation is simply money and ego; but that is not always the case.

The only volition that you have control of is your own. You can do nothing but to do what is right according to the Holy Scriptures delivered to you. Beyond that, you depend upon God to deal with those who do not deal morally or ethically with you. This is not a sanction to be naive. God had mandated that we, as sheep sent out among the wolves, **be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves** (Matt. 10:16b).

**Application:** Just in case I am being unclear, you will be cheated in a business transaction. Someone will lie to you when there is a lot of money on the line. This is pretty much guaranteed to happen. Do you let your life for the next 1, 2 or 5 years be guided by this? Very often, the correct response is to do nothing. Very often, you are better off not seeking justice, not getting revenge, not giving them a taste of their own medicine. This does not mean that you eschew all business dealings with other people because you might get burned. Before signing anything, you just need to make sure of what you are doing; and you have to bear in mind, you might be cheated, even after doing due diligence.

The study of Laban and Jacob is fascinating because both men have a reasonable point of view. We have come to find with Jacob, he sometimes gets himself into some difficult situations and, more often than not, it is his fault.

**Now he [Jacob] heard the words of the sons of Laban, saying, "Jacob has taken all that [was] our father's and from what was our father's he has made all of this [his] wealth [and splendor]."**  
[Gen. 31:1]

The end of this verse is a little difficult in its translation (although the general meaning of v. 1 is unambiguous). The final verb in this verse is the Qal perfect, third masculine singular of *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAW*], which means *to do, to make*, in a very broad sense. It is one of the creation verbs used to manufacture something out of something else. That Jacob has manufactured his own wealth out of Laban's wealth is the charge against him. The perfect tense means this is a completed action in their eyes. The direct object of this verb is *kôl* (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*] and it means *the whole*. This is followed by the demonstrative pronoun *this* and the substantive *kâbôd* (כָּבוֹד) [pronounced *kaw-BODE*] and this word means *abundance, riches, splendor, honor, glory*. So even though many translation use the word *glory* or in the margin make reference to the word *glory*, it is only one of the meanings for *kabod*. Here, it is glory and splendor with regards to wealth and abundance. The feeling here is that Laban's sons are standing in the midst of all that is Jacob's and they say, "Jacob has manufactured, from what was our father's, all of this wealth [and splendor]" as they wave one arm to take in all that is Jacob's.

Even though Jacob has been with Laban for 20 years, he is still viewed as an outsider to the family who more or less married into the family. In family disputes and disagreements, Laban's sons side with Laban, their father, and his daughters are caught in the middle. What I would suppose is, the sons are young, younger than Jacob, and they have begun in the business (Laban did not necessarily have young sons when Jacob showed up, as his daughter Rachel was a shepardess. So, these young sons who are probably greedy and expect too much too quickly in life, survey the situation and recognize that, some of what should be Laban's (in their opinion) is going to Jacob. And what is Laban's is theirs. So, for 5 or 10 years, they are speaking into Laban's left ear, telling him negative things about Jacob. At the same time, Jacob is prospering, no matter how Laban changes his salary. So, even though Jacob is not doing anything wrong, he is prospering; and this was problematic to Laban's entire family.

For 14 years, Jacob worked for free, in exchange for his wives. But now, he is taking from Laban's profits (in their view), and he is still seen as an outsider, even though he is married to Laban's daughters.

What Laban has done has been completely unfair to Jacob, however, family generally sides with family. Furthermore, they have learned to dismiss some of the things which their father, Laban does, as they have seen this behavior all their lives and have come to accept it as correct business dealings. What they see is Jacob's wealth increasing tremendously at a rate much faster than Laban's. so the only logical conclusion that they can come up with is that, since Jacob came to Laban with nothing and now has tremendous wealth, he has, for all intents and purposes, taken Laban's wealth as his own. And, even worse than that, the wealth that Jacob is accumulating is coming out of the future pockets of Laban's sons.

**And Jacob saw the face of Laban and saw there was not with him as before.** [Gen. 31:2]

You can tell a great deal about people and their attitude toward you by examining their faces. When they look beyond you, when they speak to you, but you are not even in their field of vision or within their focus, then they have dismissed you contemptuously. They are tolerating you at best. Laban is extremely unhappy because he has done every crooked thing that he could to Jacob, to snag some of Jacob's prosperity and increase, and no matter what he does, Jacob's wealth increases at a rate much greater than the increase of his own wealth. It has come to a point to where Laban is discouraged and angry and he is sharing this with his sons and the rest of his family. He has reached a point to where his facial expressions give him away. Before he could lie and cheat Jacob, but do it with a smiling, family face. However, his deception is not working. I mentioned that God blesses us apart from the particular salary that we make. Here is a perfect example. Jacob came to Laban with nothing and Laban had all the wealth (having been blessed through blessing by association with Abraham). When Jacob begins to work for Laban, even though Laban cheats him immediately, both his wealth and Jacob's wealth increases greatly. However, with the last agreement, Laban came and stole all the sheep and goats he had agreed to give to Jacob. Because of this, God finally began to bless Jacob at a rate that far exceeded His rate of blessing for Laban. Understand that Laban is not losing out; his herds and wealth are not decreasing; they are not increasing as fast as Jacob's. So Jacob, the servant, if you will, of Laban is gaining more wealth than Laban, his employer. It is not unheard of for the employee of a particular company or firm to do better than his employer. It is a matter of God's blessing. It is certainly possible to work side-by-side people or to work for people, and to be graced out by God more than they.

Furthermore, not all blessing is money. Part of this verse is almost humorous—Jacob might have been willing to suffer more underhanded business deals with Laban if Laban was still able to smile and treat him nicely; but this negative expression on Laban's face was the straw that broke the camel's back. Jacob is moving out of Laban's sphere of influence.

Unfortunately, God told Jacob to move on out of there, but it appears that Jacob obeys only when he realizes that he is in a bad place with the Laban family.

**Then Yahweh said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred and I will be with you."** [Gen. 31:3]

In the Hebrew, we do not have a tense to indicate that this was said right then and there in this time context or whether this was something that God had said to Jacob days or months ago. We will see that this is a dream which Jacob had, his second communication with God. Additional information from that dream will be forthcoming, later on in this chapter.

The change of facial expression could mean that Laban will come to regard Jacob as an enemy and as a rival. It might not be that great of a deal for Laban to be Jacob's friend and relative, but as an enemy, it could possibly be worse. Nevertheless, Jacob has nothing to fear. God is with him and God has made promise after promise to Jacob concerning his future. God can take care of Jacob and God can protect Jacob. He does the same for us.

**So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, "I see the face of your father; he does not regard me as he did before. However, the God of my father has been with me. You know that with all my strength I have served your father and yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; yet God did not permit him to cause evil to me."** [Gen. 31:4–7]

Jacob called for his wives to meet him in the field so that they could talk privately. No servant, no child, no maidservant would be near enough to hear what he was saying to them. There were certainly limited family discussion concerning the business dealings of Laban and Jacob around the Jacob household; limited because Jacob did not need any more trouble than he already had being married to two women (and to have two mistresses). However, whenever Laban did Jacob wrong, this probably became a limited topic of conversation.

There were ten times that Laban had an agreement with Jacob that Laban went back on. "From hereon in, you will keep the striped sheep offspring and I will keep the spotted ones," Laban would have said, because Jacob's herds began to produce only spotted young.

What God did not allow Laban to do to Jacob is the verb  $\text{רָאָה}$  (רָאָה) [pronounced *rawg'-AHG*] and its root meaning was *to spoil by breaking into pieces*. It has come to mean *to do evil to*. In the Hiphil stem, it means to cause this evil to occur. Jacob has a large household to maintain and a great many responsibilities. Laban, had God permitted it, would have been in a position to make Jacob's life very difficult to the point where he could not even provide for his own. However, despite Laban's lack of integrity in the business world, God still prospered Jacob. What this verse tells us that despite the evil things which occur to us and the evil people who surround us and attempt to bring about our downfall, it is God Who has the ultimate control. Even though every sour business deal with Laban was an attempt to shift the dollars from Jacob's pocket into Laban's, God continued to prosper Jacob and slowed or stopped the financial growth of Laban. In other words, the evil that other purpose against us can have no effect whatsoever upon us, if that is God's choice.

**If he [Laban] had said the spotted shall be your wages, then all of the flock bore spotted [offspring]; and if he said the striped shall be your wages, then all of the flock bore striped [offspring]."** [Gen. 31:8]

Now Jacob gives an illustration—not of the soured business deals, but of hypothetically what would occur if Laban said this or that. Jacob has been prospered because God has prospered him. If Laban had decided to make the spotted livestock Jacob's as Jacob's wages, then every calve and lamb born thereafter would be spotted. God controlled the breeding, Laban and Jacob did not. Jacob had earlier tried some hocus pocus (Gen. 30:37–39), but God blessed him despite his goofy idea. Jacob may have thought that what he did was a fantastic, revolutionary idea, but he was not blessed do to his activity with his livestock, but he was blessed directly by God, despite his ignorant behavior.

At this point, Jacob acknowledges that God blessed him; he was not blessed by his goofy breeding techniques:

**"In this way, God has taken away the cattle of your father and [He has] given them to me."** [Gen. 31:9]

Here Jacob publically (at least to his wives) tells them that his prosperity and Laban's loss are attributable to God and to nothing else. Jacob recognizes that there was clearly a loss on Laban's side and a gain on his. God performed this primarily due to blessing by association, although Jacob is showing some spiritual growth.

Observation of this would have been simple. Laban comes around and says, "From now on, you only get the blotched sheep as your own." Well, thereafter, the young which are born most turn out to be blotched—even if there had been few blotched young born before this.

Bear in mind, Laban could have also determined that Jacob could only keep the blotched females (or blotched males). 10 times Laban changed the rules on Jacob.

**"And it has come to pass in the mating season of the flock [that] I looked up and saw in a dream that behold, the male-goats, which leaped upon the flock were striped, spotted and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.'" And I said, 'I am here.' And He said, 'Look up and see all the goats that leap upon the flock are striped, spotted and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.'" [Gen. 31:10–12]**

This the most recent communication between God and Jacob. God spoke in a dream to Jacob. God has just spoken directly to Jacob to tell him to return to the land of Canaan (Gen. 31:3). The contents of that second dream are not revealed in their entirety until now. So, it appears that this is the same dream, which Jacob apparently had awhile back (a few weeks or months ago). The important part of the dream is spoken of back in v. 3; but that was not necessarily all that God said to Jacob, according to this passage.

We have discussed the various other possibilities. God could have come to Jacob in two dreams, where in one, He says, "Go back to Canaan" and, in the other, God says, "Go back to Canaan; and also, you are being blessed because of Me." The way I read and interpret this, we are speaking of the same dream.

Had someone else written this, he may have gone over every single detail twice (at the beginning of the chapter and when Jacob tells his wives about the dream). Jacob doesn't write that way, however.

Because of what Jacob is, in the back of my mind I keep thinking that maybe he is lying to his wives about this portion of the dream; however, what he is saying is true—God did give him prosperity by whatever livestock were designated as his, those suddenly became the dominant offspring population. This was all God's work; so, even if Jacob was lying about the dream, what he is saying is actually true. For this reason, I believe that God did communicate to him and that he is telling his wives the truth. Furthermore, I think that it is less likely that Jacob would lie to his wives about this. Apparently, he has just withheld information for a time (a week or a month or two).

**"I am the God [of] Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow [lit., vowed a vow] to Me. Now arise and go forth from this land and return to the land of your birth."** [Gen. 31:13]

It is this verse, God refers back to the events of the end of Gen. 28. In Bethel, Jacob has a dream in Gen. 28:10–17. The next morning, Jacob stands a stone on end and pours oil over it (Gen. 28:18, 22). When the Angel of God speaks to Jacob in a dream, He says, "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me." (Gen. 31:13a). In other words, this dream that Jacob had was pretty extensive; and yet, it has apparently taken him a little while to decide that he needs to take his family to Canaan now.

God's revelation to Jacob covered (1) his prosperity and Laban's loss; (2) the command to leave this area. Since God has commanded Jacob to leave, then Jacob could leave in an honorable way; and (3) a reminder of Who is speaking to him. However, it also appears that Jacob did not obey God immediately. (what a surprise!)

What Jacob should have done is, immediately gone directly to Laban, tell Laban that God has spoken to him and that he needs to leave. He intends to take his rightful portion and he is gone. However, since he does not, he will set off a series of events that could have been avoided.

**Then answered Rachel and Leah and they said to him, "Is there yet to us any portion or inheritance in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigner? He has sold us and he has been using up the money given for us."** [Gen. 31:14–15]

We now get a better feel for Rachel and Leah's feelings toward their father. They have both been married for about 13 years to Jacob<sup>84</sup> and they recognize that Laban sold them for Jacob's labor (we might even think, his slavery). He was not at all interested in their well-being; their find a good husband. He first pawned off Leah on Jacob, even though that was not who he wanted, so that he could get seven more years of service out of Jacob.

The daughters feel that their father Laban treats them as he would treat foreigners; he is a user and he will use anyone, but he will tend to exploit those who are not related to him even more than his own relatives. This has been his attitude toward his daughters. They were used to obtain personal, financial gain. The fact that Jacob knew Yahweh and was prospered by God is something which was not an issue to Laban and not a part of the equation. They are expressing frustration with the way that they have been treated as well. Jacob is concerned that he may be taking them from their family and that they might be resistant for that reason. This is not the case; they have no bonds to this family because of the shabby way their father has used them.

**"All the property which God has taken away from out father, it [rightfully belongs] to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do [it]."** [Gen. 31:16]

---

<sup>84</sup> After Laban deceived Jacob into marrying the wrong daughter, I think that he gave Rachel to him on credit. That is, he married Rachel soon after, but had to work an additional 7 years for her.

God's timing is impeccable; perhaps a few years ago, these women would not have traveled with Jacob, not wanting to break the family ties. However, they have grown up enough and have seen clearly enough to recognize that they have been used by their father. Notice that they speak as a unit. It is not Rachel speaking and Leah will go along with whatever; or vice versa. They speak with one voice. Up until this time, it is possible that Jacob was not ready. He still has to face Esau, whom he himself cheated 20 years ago. They are all ready to follow what God would want them to do. They recognize that Jacob has not swindled their father in any way but has worked honestly for that which he has gotten. The women see the justness of Jacob's view of things, despite this being against their father.

**So Jacob arose and placed his sons and his wives on camels and he drove away all his cattle and all his which he had gained—the cattle in his possession which he had acquired in Paddan-aram—to go to Isaac, his father, to the land of Canaan. [Gen. 31:17–18]**

There is a right way of doing this and there is Jacob's way. God has told him to go to Canaan and his wives are completely behind him in this regard. What Jacob needs to do is the end his relationship with Laban honorably. There are certainly things to tie up after 20 years of service, livestock to be divided, responsibilities to be delegated in Jacob's absence. And because Jacob is following God's orders, he does not have to fear Laban. Furthermore, Jacob's line is promised to be as the sand of the sea, the dust of the earth and the stars in the heavens—so Jacob does not have to worry. He can be honorable toward Laban and he is going to do fine. However, he sneaks out like a thief, as though he has done something wrong.

**And Laban had gone to shear his sheep and Rachel stole the teraphim [household idols] which belonged to her father. [Gen. 31:19]**

For centuries, these teraphim had confused theologians.

Laban's pursuit of Jacob was quite the costly venture. His own work and overseeing of his flocks, along with his men that he took with him (certainly enough to outnumber the men which Jacob had) would have negative financial repercussions for years. It has only been in past century (1925–31) when excavations were done in Nuzi in Northern Mesopotamia, where Laban had resided. The 4000 clay tablets which were found give us a fairly thorough picture of what life was like during those times. And unlike the excavations at Mari where tablets dealing with the royal families were discovered, here these tablets dealt with the common man. The most obvious observation is that writing was widespread during that time and records were kept by the common man. This leads credence to the fact that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob wrote their own portions of Scripture. The customs and traditions evident in these tablets mirror the information that we find here in Genesis. This gives us good reason to believe that Genesis was written during or soon after the event recorded and not centuries later as some liberal (and conservative) critics have maintained. Otherwise, these peculiar customs would be absent, due to a lack of knowledge concerning them. You see, these customs and traditions were unknown to us until the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, so it would be unlikely that a book would be filled with these same customs and yet be written or compiled a millennium after the events described.

For those who wonder why some theologians would suppose that Genesis (or any other book of the Bible) would be written long after the events described, it is because they do not like prophecy. They do not want God, through His Word, to predict that something would happen and then have it come to pass years or centuries later. Therefore, late dates have been assigned to a lot of books of the Old Testament; it is their way of saying that God of the Bible could not tell us what would occur in the future. However, we will see time and time again that the books of the Bible will contain customs, nuances, slang, and cultural sayings peculiar to the times during which they were actually written. These same customs, nuances and slang are often lost even a century later, making it highly unlikely that many passages of the Bible would be written centuries after they occurred. They are too rich in lost and later found cultural heritage. These teraphim are a case in point.

These teraphim, or household idols, were a bit of nonsense that the Jews picked up from the Aramæans. These gods represented protection for the household and they were consulted on matters of importance. One author claimed that Rachel stole these so that Laban could not go to the household gods and find out where she and



Jacob had escaped to. However, this does not make sense because not only does Laban catch up to them, but Rachel does not return the teraphim to her father even then. The more logical explanation, found in ZPEB, the Scofield Bible, and in the Nuzi tablets is that with the possession of these idols, which were taken fairly seriously, went the headship and possession of the household. This would have given Jacob rights to all that Laban had, instead of Laban's own sons. This was not right, even though Laban had exploited Jacob. Furthermore, Jacob's future was not in Haran but in the land of Canaan. And, in reference to the traditional d the original writing of this portion of Genesis, Scofield points out that this piece of information was so well-known at that time that there was no reason to expound on what was occurring. When anyone writes anything, they take a lot of their own cultural heritage and their environment for granted. The **Doctrine of Teraphim** is found here and in 1Sam. 19:13.

---

## Summary of the Doctrine of Teraphim

19. Teraphim are religious images and that they are sometimes consulted for guidance; and that they possibly acted as household protectors. I would think that *teraphim* is strictly plural and not used like the word Elohim (which can mean *God* or *gods*).
20. These "images," teraphim (see Judges 17:5; 18:14; etc.), were usually small (v. 34) human figurines, occasionally larger, often made of wood (1 Sam. 19:13-16). Near Eastern excavations have brought them to light in profuse numbers, made of wood, clay, and precious metals. Some represent male gods, but the majority are figurines of female deities 2 to 3 in. in length. They were used as household gods or were carried on the body as protective charms. Since most of them represent nude goddesses whose sexual features are accentuated, they were probably thought to promote fertility.
21. That these images are related to fertility may explain Laban's sons (who do not appear to be on the scene when Jacob arrived in Haran). And this would explain why Rachel, of all the women, would have chosen to steal them (hoping to become as fertile as Leah).
22. We find teraphim in pretty much every time period of the history of Israel. We find them in the time of the judges, in the time of the patriarchs, during the formation of the monarchy, during the late monarchy, and in the post-exilic period. One might say that they are almost as pervasive in Israel's society as the picture of Jesus or the statues of Mary are in our society.
23. As found in Scripture:
  - 1) Laban had them and his daughter Rachel stole them from him. The importance of these teraphim is that they perhaps acted almost like a last will and testament; that is, the person in possession of them is figured to be entitled to the estate of the person to whom they originally belonged. That is, Rachel did not necessarily take these to worship, but to insure her inheritance from her father Laban. It is more likely that she took the images because of their relationship with fertility. Gen. 31
  - 2) In the book of Judges, a man of Ephraim named Micah builds himself a shrine and makes an ephod and teraphim. Then he goes out and hires a priest to be his personal household priest. From this passage, we know that there is a religious significance to these teraphim. An ephod, by the way, would be used to predict the future or to suggest a particular course of action. Some Danites who decide to seek some land further north, happen across Micah's house and speak to his personal priest (they apparently recognized his voice). He gives them what they believe to be good information, so when they return to the area of Micah's home, they steal his religious artifacts and his priest. It is again clear by this passage that the teraphim have religious significance and that *household idols* (or, *household idol*) is probably a very reasonable English rendering of *teraphim*. This particular group of Danites then set up their own northern shrine to the gods.
  - 3) In 1Sam. 15:23, Saul disobeyed God and had allowed at least the king of the Amalekites to live, and he saved out the best of their livestock. Samuel chewed him out, saying, "Is [it] pleasing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah with burnt offerings and sacrifices as listening [and obeying] the voice of Y<sup>e</sup>howah? Observe, listening [and obeying is] more than sacrifice; [it is more] pleasing to given attention [to His word is] more than the fat of rams. For the sin of divination [is] rebellion and iniquity and **teraphim** [is] being stubborn; since you reject the Word of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, He rejects you from [being] king." Samuel equates the sin of divination with rebellion and iniquity; he equates the use of teraphim with being stubborn. He is saying that one is no better than the other. This passage along with Zech. 10:2 tell us that God took a very dim view of such idols (along with direct statements, e.g., Ex. 20:4-5).

- 4) In 1Sam. 19:13, Michal uses teraphim to put into David's bed so that it appears as though he is sleeping there. This means that, in David's household, they kept teraphim, or idolatrous household idols. It suggests that the teraphim was relatively large (or, that there was more than one). The implied difference in size from what we saw in the book of Genesis is easily explained, as she is the daughter of the king. This suggests that God allowed Saul to drive David from his own home because idolatry was practiced there.
  - 5) At this point, we may have to extrapolate and speculate somewhat. Back in 1Sam. 15, Saul was beginning to become more and more negative toward God. He flat out disobeyed God's clear and direct orders and Samuel tells him that disobedience is the same as idolatry. This would suggest to me that Saul was not an idolater at the time. However, given the fact that Michal had a household idol or two, that would indicate that Saul possibly began incorporating these as part of a self-protection plan, seeing how he had been rejected by Jehovah, the God of Israel. His own use influenced his daughters and at least one of his daughters also had household idols, as we see here (it would have made less sense for her to go out and find some to use on a moment's notice).
  - 6) 300 years later, Josiah removes the mediums, spiritists, teraphim, idols and all other abominations from the land of Judah. 2Kings 23:24
  - 7) The prophets speak negatively of these teraphim. Ezek. 21:21 Hosea 3:4 Zech. 10:2. Hosea even suggests that Israel's idolatry would keep Israel from functioning as a national entity for a long time.
24. Our conclusion is simply that these were household figurines or idols which could have been used for protection, illness, guidance; and that they may be related to fertility and/or inheritance. The Bible clearly indicates that these were idolatrous and there are several instances where God caused various believers to separate from places and circumstances where these images were.

**Furthermore, Jacob stole [away from] the heart of Laban, the Aramæan, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee.** [Gen. 31:20]

Jacob has obviously outsmarted Laban here. The verb is *gânab* (גָּנַב) [pronounced *gaw-NAB*] and it means to steal in the literal or the figurative sense. It can mean *to take by stealth* or it can refer to *the sudden sweeping off by storm*. Here, Jacob is stealing away. There is nothing implied in terms of taking anything. The common use for this verb means to do something quietly and suddenly. *Heart* is *lab* (לֵב) [pronounced *la<sup>b</sup>v*] and it refers to the inner man. However, what is done here is a play on words. Laban is *lâbân* (לֵבָן) and heart is *lab*; so we have a bit of playfulness with the language in Jacob's part, who, for twenty years, wanted to say something about the heart of Laban and this gave him his first opportunity. Jacob, in v. 20b, explains what he meant. Jacob was not what you would call much of a writer. Whereas Isaac was often repetitive, although he perhaps didn't have a great deal to say, Jacob is sparse and when he has a pun smoldering for twenty years, he is unable to bring that off as a decent author could. However, that is the writing style of Jacob which God the Holy Spirit honored.

What we are concerned with is the fact that Jacob left town without telling Laban, and in this way, he stole from the heart of Laban. Laban was deceptive and tricky and Jacob finally was the same way back. Jacob always had the ability, but not against someone as sharp and as schooled as his uncle/father-in-law.

**He fled with all that he had and arose and crossed the Euphrates and traveled [lit., set his face] toward the hill country of Gilead.** [Gen. 31:21]

Jacob, like Isaac and Abraham, lived in a state of fear of certain people. He feared Laban, even though God has given Jacob several guarantees, including the fact that God told him to return to the land of Canaan.

**On the third day, was when it was told to Laban that Jacob had fled.** [Gen. 31:22]

This is a marvelous verse. Back in Gen. 30:35–36, Laban had struck an agreement with Jacob to give Jacob the spotted and striped livestock, and then Laban went and took the livestock which Jacob had which was striped and spotted and hauled it away a three day's journey away from Jacob. This was Laban being sly. He not only stole the animals which would have likely produced offspring which would have been Jacob's, but he moved these

animals three days from Jacob, so that Jacob cannot somehow take them. However, because of this, when Jacob leaves, he automatically has a three day head start from the outset. Even though Jacob did not behave as he should have, it is gratifying to see that Laban had outsmarted himself in this case.

**He [Laban] took his kinsmen with him and he pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. [Gen. 31:23]**

Jacob was traveling with two wives, two mistresses, a few slaves and children (some who were teenagers). For these reasons, he traveled slower than Laban did. Laban was riding with a vengeance. He did not like to be out-deceived and as quite upset when Jacob deceived him. He was quite indignant and self-righteous about it.

**However, God came to Laban the Aramæan in a dream by night and said to him, "Be careful that you say not a word to Jacob either good or bad. [Gen. 31:24]**

One wonders if God has shown Himself to many unbelievers. As far as I can recall, there has only been one, the first unbeliever, Cain (and Cain may have believed in the Revealed God; but he also acted despicably, killing his brother). From Gen. 24:31, 50–51, we can determine that Laban was probably a believer, one who has strayed far from God in his life. His daughters are evidently believers; although we do not know if that can be attributed to Jacob or to Laban.

Several things which Laban has said or done have come back to haunt him, so to speak. Taking livestock which rightfully belonged to Jacob and moving this himself and the livestock three days from Jacob is what gave Jacob the head start. And, when informed many years ago that the Lord had apparently answered the prayer of Isaac's servant concerning Rebekah, Laban's sister, Laban said, "The matter comes from the Lord, so we cannot speak to you bad or good."

Jacob has been sent by God away from Laban (just as Abraham was sent away from his relatives almost two centuries previous), so God has warned Laban not to speak to Jacob, good or bad. From the use of this expression, here, and back in Gen. 24, this appears to be an idiom of that time. God was not forbidding Laban to catch up to Jacob nor was He denying Laban the chance to speak to Jacob. God has made it clear that Jacob is His and that Laban needed to guard whatever it was that he had to say to Jacob. In other words, Laban was not to judge Jacob or his motives. Since Jacob is obeying God, Laban is to watch his tongue with regards to Jacob's actions.

**Finally, Laban overtook Jacob . Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country and Laban encamped with his kinsmen in the hill country of Gilead. Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done that you have stolen my heart and carried away my daughters like captive of the sword. Why did you flee secretly and steal away and you did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs with tambourine and lyre?" [Gen. 31:25–27]**

Here Laban asks some reasonable questions. Despite the fact that he is a liar and a cheat, he, like most men, has deep within him, some true love for his own daughters and when he is faced with not seeing them again, he needs a bit of closure to that relationship. In this way, Jacob did *steal away his heart*, as his daughters, despite the way he used them for material gain, still had his heart. It would have been proper to come to him and for him to prepare a farewell feast.

**"And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters; here [lit., now] you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father yesterday spoke to me, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house. But why did you steal my deities?" [Gen. 31:28–30]**

The word used for *God* and for *deities* in this verse is Elohim, or, more properly, 'Elôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*] and it is a word which may be applied to any or all of the Trinity; but it may also apply to false gods

(Ex. 18:11 22:19), governmental magistrates (Ex. 21:6 22:7–8) and to household deities (Gen. 31:30a), or idols (Gen. 31:30b Deut. 10:17). It is rather humorous that Laban, who has just been spoken to by the God of gods, the Creator of the Universe, is suddenly concerned about his household gods, his teraphim, who have not so much as even muttered or mumbled to him, let alone come to him in a dream and speak to him. We have examined the meaning of these household idols, but it does not eliminate the fact that this is paganism, pure and simple. This is why Abraham was told to separate many years ago from his family and why Jacob is told to return to the land of Canaan. There is the doctrine of separation which goes back all the way to the times of the Patriarchs. And here, as it is also given in the New Testament, separation is from fellow believers, not from unbelievers.

**Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid—for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force." [Gen. 31:31]**

Jacob is truthful with Laban at this point. He high-tailed it out of Haran because he was afraid of Laban and what Laban might do. Jacob feels as though he can be honest at this point; since he tried to outsmart and to circumvent what would have been proper behavior and that didn't work.

**"Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live in the presence of our kinsmen. Point out what I have that which is yours and take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the idols [lit., *them*]. [Gen. 31:32]**

Jacob had no intention of stealing anything from Laban; nor was he concerned with inheriting anything that was Laban's. He did not know a lot about God's plan, but he did realize that God has prospered him greatly at Laban's expense (Gen. 31:9); so there was no reason for him to take anything that was Laban's or anything that would entitle him to inherit that which was Laban's at a later date. Because of this, Jacob did not steal the idols, nor would he have expected anyone else to. Jacob's statement, however, had Rachel any thought to speaking up and returning the idols, suddenly quieted her down. She had made a fairly significant mistake and decided not to say a word.

**So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maidservants, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. [Gen. 31:33]**

This is a fascinating series of events. Laban has just come whining about not being able to say goodbye to his daughters, and now he is going through their personal effects, which, if he found the teraphim, would potentially result in their death, due to Jacob's oath made in front of everyone. This lends even more credence to the view that these household gods carried with them the rights of inheritance and that they may have had some inherent value as well.

Laban was a selfish, materialistic man who wanted to have the say as to where his wealth went. There is no reason to be concerned about your present wealth or your wealth when you go to the grave. This does not preclude making out a will, but it is not a reason to be abnormally upset, either. As a loving father, when Jacob made the statement that the one who stole these teraphim shall not live, then it should have been Laban who said, prior to looking for anything, that such an act would not be necessary. Otherwise, had he found the idols, he would be sentencing a daughter to death.

We also get an idea as to the living arrangements. Jacob, Rachel and Leah all had their own tents. These tents are where they would go for solitude, to sleep and they were where their personal belongings were kept. The two maidservants shared a tent. The children probably stayed in the respective tents of their mothers. We do not know if there were any other servants besides those mentioned (however, given Jacob's wealth, having servants would have been expected).

**Now Rachel had taken the household deities [lit., *the teraphim*] and put them in the camel's saddle and sat upon them. Laban felt all about the tent but could not find them. And she said to her father, "Do not be angry, my lord, but I cannot arise before you because the way of women is upon me." So he searched, but did not find the teraphim. [Gen. 31:34–35]**

These idols were of a fairly small size, small enough to be hidden under Rachel's saddle, among her other things, and small enough to be sufficiently covered as she sat there. It would have been customary for her to get off her camel and to greet her father, but she did not, not wanting to be executed over these idols. Would Jacob and Laban have executed her? After Jacob's strong statement, Laban looks in the tents of his two daughters. This indicates that executing the thief would be very likely. How they would have both responded if they found out Rachel was the thief—there is no telling about that.

Again, all three human reactions and this drama here is easily explained by the teraphim. They were not gold idols, nor were they prized because one could go to them and divine information from them. It goes back to a Hurrian custom wherein the owner of an estate could bequeath his wealth to his son-in-law rather than to his sons by giving his household teraphim to him. If this was ever later contested in court by the sons, the son-in-law only had to show up in court, with the teraphim to settle the matter. This explains why Rachel would have stolen the idol. However, at the same time, it would seem even more likely that Rachel's motivation for stealing them would be to improve her fertility with Jacob.

We have already seen that she and Leah are on Jacob's side in this matter—he has worked years for Laban and has been cheated repeatedly, so this is Rachel's way of seeing that the rightful inheritance goes to their children because (1) Jacob has worked so long for Laban without just remuneration and (2) she and Leah are Laban's daughters who received very little at marriage, so they deserved something by way of inheritance. To her way of thinking, Laban's entire estate would have been the proper price. This could certainly explain why Laban left in a mad rush with enough men to overpower Jacob and his men (however, bear in mind, Laban could have viewed these idols in one way and Rachel could have viewed them in another).

In any case, Laban wants to give the estate to whomever he chooses—and, like many men, he wants to use this inheritance to exploit, control and manipulate his children. Jacob is absolutely flabbergasted that Laban would even accuse him of such a thing, and when the idols are not found, he lets fly with everything that he has been holding in for these past 20 years.

**Finally, Jacob became very angry and upbraided Laban. Jacob responded and said to Laban, "What is my offense? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?" [Gen. 31:36]**

The longer that Laban searches, the angrier that Jacob becomes. He is an intelligent man. Laban came and made a big show about how he is upset because Jacob stole his daughters and he is unable to say goodbye to them properly; and now, all of a sudden, he is not kissing his daughters goodbye, he is on a careful search for these teraphim; a search that could result in the execution of one of his daughters. Jacob is pondering this while his and his wives' personal effects are being gone through. As he puts all of this together, he gets more and more angry with Laban and his phoney facade. He speaks when he can hold it in no longer. He continues:

**"Although you have felt through all my possession, what have you found of all the household goods of your house, set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen that they may decide between us two." [Gen. 31:37]**

Jacob has even gotten a bit self-righteous here. He was fairly certain that the deities had not been stolen from Laban, and, after Laban searched for some time and came up with nothing, Jacob is ready for him to display anything which was not rightfully taken so that Jacob's men and Laban's men can decide who's right and who's wrong here. Jacob is definitely into self-justification.

**"These twenty years have I been with you. Your ewes and your female-goats have not miscarried and the rams of your flocks I have not eaten. That which was torn by wild beasts, I did not bring to you; I myself bore the loss. From my hand you required it whether stolen by day or stolen by night. [So] I was: by day, the heat consumed me, and by night, the frost, and sleep fled from my eyes. These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock and you changed my wages ten times." [Gen. 31:38–41]**

Remember that Jacob has been stewing about his situation for a long time and he has had seven days of travel to think about what he would say if he ever ran into Laban again. You know that during those seven days, he rehearsed parts of this speech over and over again. We don't even know if Laban is even listening. He is concerned about his household deities, which hold the key to what will be done with his inheritance (which can be a carrot held out in front of someone or a club to beat someone with).

Jacob lists the dedicated service that he has provided and along side this list names where Laban has come up wanting as his supervisor. He saw to it that the animals in Laban's flock were well-taken care of so that none of them had problems giving birth. He did not kill those animals important in breeding for a feast. When an animal was killed, Jacob did not take this animal to Laban for credit. He buried the animal (or ate of it) and absorbed the loss. Jacob served Laban seven years each for his two daughters, one of whom he did not want (although, he does not mention that here—by this time it doesn't matter); and he continued to serve Laban for another six years, although during this period of time, Laban continued to dink with his wages. That is, they would agree upon one method of payment, then Laban would change his mind. Then they would try another method of payment and Laban would change his mind again. These weren't raises by any means. Each time his wages were changed, it was Laban feeling as though he got the short end of the stick so he tried to extort more production from and less payment to Jacob.

**"If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac had not been on my side, surely you would have sent me away now empty-handed. My affliction and the labor of my hands God saw and He rendered judgement last night."** [Gen. 31:42]

Laban's plan was all for Laban and nothing for Jacob. Jacob was prospered only because God allowed him to be prospered. God, being a righteous judge, gave Jacob what was due. You can tell that Jacob had been holding all of this in for a long time and probably appreciates the chance to let fly.

**Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters; the children are my children; the flocks are my flocks. Furthermore, all that you see is mind. And to my daughters, what can I do this day or to their children whom they have borne? Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I; let it be a witness between you and me."** [Gen. 31:43—44]

Laban has not thought about Holy Spirit replies as Jacob has. He was certain that he would find the household deities and then be able to go on and on about them. However, he did not; so he was almost at a loss for words. Those were his daughters and their children, in a way, were his. Since Jacob came to him with nothing, in a way, all the flocks were also his. He probably realizes that Jacob did work a great deal for him and was due remuneration; but, neither he nor Jacob are into naming their own shortcomings and faults; nor would one really concede to the argument of the other. Jacob's argument sounds better because (1) he is right and (2) he has thought about it for a long time.

Laban didn't think over the various possibilities and the things which could have occurred when he caught up to Jacob, so he had less to say. This covenant is somewhat of a truce; a point at which they could get on with their own lives and have basically a nonaggression pact signed between them. Insofar as the basic idea behind it; a peace agreement, this is not unlike our agreement with God the Father based upon the work of god the Son; and God has made a covenant between Himself and us—a covenant of peace.

**So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar and Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather stones" and they gathered stones and made a heap and they ate there by the heap. And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha [the heap of witnesses] but Jacob called it Galeed [witness-pile].** [Gen. 31:45—47]

It appears that Jacob and Laban could not even agree to a simple name. Jacob wanted to name it one thing and Laban another—not that the names are that different. It is almost as if one of them wanted to have the last say. Since the other one would not give in, this pile of rocks had two names. The difference was also in the language; Laban's language was Aramaic and Jacob's was Hebrew. They were related, separated by a couple centuries

when Abraham had left. During that time, they developed separately. This is why the two words seem so entirely different and have roughly the same meaning. Jacob's name probably stuck because this country was later named Gilead (which is quite similar in the Hebrew). This gathering of stones and piling them on top of one another to represent a treaty or some other event was a common practice during this era.

**Then Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." Therefore, he [Jacob] named it Galeed and Mizpah, for he [Laban] had said, "Yahweh watch between you and me when we are apart from one another." [Gen. 31:48–49]**

The first *said* is in the Qal imperfect. However, the naming of these rocks was in the Qal perfect, meaning that the name stayed with it. In the v. 47, when Laban names these rocks, it is in the Qal imperfect, referring to an incomplete action; but, in the same verse when Jacob names it, that is in the Qal perfect, meaning a completed action. This tells us that Jacob's name stuck and Laban's did not. Jacob decided to name it as he did because Laban *had said* (Qal perfect tense again). These rocks represent a nonaggression pact and a boundary between Jacob and Laban.

This is a foolish benediction which is used in Christendom today because this is an agreement made between two men who do not trust each other (and for good reason). These rocks separate them from each other. To Jacob, these stones represent the covenant that was made between them before all the witnesses of his people and Laban's. To Laban, they were a witness that Jacob would treat his daughters with integrity in the future. For both of them, it was separation and a nonaggression pact. It is not two sincere Christians oozing with love for one another, praying for divine guidance and involvement in each other's lives. They have a pile of rocks where one will stay on one side and one on the other side for the rest of their natural lives.

**"If you mistreat my daughters or if you take wives besides my daughters—no man with us [is there to witness this]! You recall [lit., you see] God [is] a witness between you and me." [Gen. 31:50]**

This is a moderately difficult verse to interpret. What seems most reasonable, given the context, is, when Laban says *no man with us*, he means that if Jacob does not treat his daughters well or if he takes another wife, even though Laban has no man from his family to witness this, God is a witness to Jacob's potentially evil behavior. An English translation from the Septuagint reads: *If you will humble my daughters, if you should take wives in addition to my daughters, see, there is no one with us looking on. God [is] a witness between me and you.*

**Then Laban said to Jacob, "See this heap and the pillar which I have set between you and me—this heap is a witness and the pillar is a witness that I will not pass over this heap to you and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me [intending] to [cause me] harm." [Gen. 31:51–52]**

It is this passage which clear presents these rocks as a boundary between Laban and Jacob and as a nonaggression pact. I have added a couple of English words which I hope helps with the meaning of this verse. This is an eternal parting of the ways.

**"The God of Nahor and the God of Abraham judge between us—the God of their father." So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and called his kinsmen to eat bread and they ate bread and remained all night on the mountain. Finally, Laban arose early in the morning and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he departed and Laban returned. [Gen. 31:53–55]**

First, let me deal with a minor consideration: v. 55 in the English is actually Gen. 32:1 in the Hebrew. However, even a superficial reading indicates that this verse properly belongs in chapter 31.

From hereon in, we will only hear Laban's name mentioned 3 in reference to his being a relative of someone (Gen. 32:4 46:18, 25), but we will never see Laban again in Scripture. No one will refer to him in the New

Testament and his appearance in history is essentially over. We have two men here with the same spiritual heritage; both men are believers in Jesus Christ. Both men are devious and self-serving. However, Laban falls into God's plan only insofar as his relationship to Jacob. God rejected him and told Abraham to separate from him. He eventually even had household idols, although he several times seemed to recognize the preeminence of Jesus Christ. Jacob, on the other hand, although he is not a spiritual giant by any means, we have seen that his character has improved over the years. He is still not a person in full maturity; however, his youngest son, Joseph, will emerge as the spiritual giant of his day. As Thieme made reference: Joseph will be the spiritual Atlas of his generation. It will be Joseph who will carry the world on his back. Every few generations, there is a man whose spiritual greatness is such that the generation that he is in receives somewhat of a free ride from him. They are blessed and preserved due to his greatness.

Note that Jacob offers a sacrifice to commemorate this event and to offer homage to God the Father. and God the Son. Those in the Old Testament did not have a complete understanding of what it was that they were doing. They recognized that these animal sacrifices were crucial to their worship of Yahweh, although they did not understand exactly how. Whereas they saw through an opaque glass we now see clearly. It will be analogous to heaven where we will know God even as we are known.

---

---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---



**Genesis 32** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 32

### Genesis 32:1–32

Gen. 32:1–5	<b>Jacob travels to meet Esau, his brother</b>
Gen. 32:6–7a	<b>Jacob's great fear of Esau</b>
Gen. 32:7b–8	<b>Jacob's human viewpoint</b>
Gen. 32:9–12	<b>Jacob appeals to God to intercede between himself and Esau</b>
Gen. 32:13–23	<b>Jacob depends upon his own human viewpoint to bring peace between himself and Esau</b>
Gen. 32:24–32	<b>Jacob wrestles with an angel of God</b>

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

v. 18	<b>Preparation by the Word of God</b>
v. 24	<b>Why God Wrestles with Jacob</b>

**Introduction:** Chapter 32 is incredible. We will see Jacob reveal a few minute of spiritual growth. He will fear Esau greatly and when he hears Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men, Jacob at first panics, but then he goes to God with the promises which were delivered to him. This glorifies God when we take what He has told us and demand that God keep His Word to us. We reveal faith in Him and in His Word. For a few minutes, we see Jacob at his best. Then we find him falling back into human viewpoint and trying to appease Esau—to buy Esau off. God gave Jacob this prosperity and Jacob wants to give all of it to Esau because he is afraid. His spiritual side and his carnal side are at odds with one another in this chapter. We ourselves fight with our own sin nature and switches between spiritual and carnal sides. To others, we appear hypocritical (which we are—every Christian is) and schizophrenic (which we are—every Christian who is periodically filled with the Spirit is). This wrestling match which is occurring within Jacob's soul, although Jacob does not fully recognize it as such, will be illustrated in the last half of chapter 32. Jesus Christ Himself will wrestle with Jacob and cause him to limp for the rest of his life.

Elijah said to the people observing him at the altar: "How long will you limp between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, then follow him; but if Baal is God, then follow him."

### Jacob Travels to Meet Esau, His Brother

**Now, as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim.** [Gen. 32:1–2]

Angels existed several billion years before we were on this earth (I say this based upon the age of the earth and based upon the fact that the angels dwelt on the earth with the dinosaurs before we did. Because many of them fell and became degenerate, God packed the earth in ice. For those that fell, there had to be judgment and for those who did not fall, there needed to be a revealing of God's love tempered with His justice. Angels who fell are called demons and they operate more or less under Satan's authority with their attempts to vex the Christian (although, most Christians can be left alone because they will shoot themselves in the foot without any help) and

they attempt to usher in a world of lustful satisfaction, unity, brotherhood and world peace, with severe punishment for those who do not want to go along with Satan's program.

The word for angels (v. 1) and messengers (v. 6) in the Hebrew is the same: mal'âk (מַלְאָךְ) [pronounced *mal-AWK*] and it can mean *messenger, one sent with a message, a prophet (inasmuch as they are sent with a message, angel, as well as a theophanic angel (Jesus Christ prior to His incarnation)*. These are likely angels because nothing of the conversation is recorded. Therefore, they did not have much of a message.

The angels are there to give Jacob confidence in all that has occurred. They are also his guardian angels. God uses angels in many different ways, and one of those ways is to provide us with protection. Jacob is about to face a real spiritual battle in which he will weigh the pros and cons of a particular action and he will have the clear choice to believe God and to take God at His Word or to take the low road of human viewpoint. Such a choice is extremely relevant to our lives today.

Jacob named this area Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced *makh-an-AH-yim*] and it means *two armies, two camps*. Jacob named it this because there was his group that was encamped there and the group of angels that were encamped there. We are slightly east of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea, although we do not know exactly where the original site was. As we will see in the future, Machānayim is frequently mentioned in connection with David.

**So Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, instructing them, saying, "Thus you will say to my lord, Esau: 'Your servant Jacob; I have stayed with Laban until now and I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants and maidservants and I have sent [these men] to tell my lord in order that I may find grace in your sight.'" [Gen. 32:3–5]**

The purpose of telling Esau that he has all these possessions is to let Esau know that Jacob does not need the material gain of his father's inheritance. Jacob did not return to take anything from Esau. Furthermore, this indicates that there may be some generosity on Jacob's part. But, this being Jacob, perhaps the whole reason for this present is to attempt to manipulate his brother Esau.

At this point in time, Jacob is not certain as to what he will do. He will flounder between divine and human viewpoint a couple times in this passage. He'll begin with human viewpoint, then he will trust God, then he will return to human viewpoint. He wrestles with God's promises and his own fears. So, at this point in time, he is not certain what he will do. There are portions of this passage, when compared to the next chapter which seem contradictory, but that is not the case. It is simply that, he puts together a plan, and then he changes that plan.

*Lord* is the word 'ādōwn (אָדוֹן) [pronounced *aw-DOWNE*] and this can be a reference to any one of the Trinity and it can be a term of respect and deference. Jacob is obviously using this in the latter sense.

### Jacob's Great Fear of Esau

**So the messengers returned to Jacob saying, "We came to your brother, Esau and he is coming to meet you [along] with 400 men [lit., and 400 men with him]." Then Jacob was extremely frightened and distressed within. [Gen. 32:6–7a].**

Jacob has a problem. He left Esau under the worst of circumstances. He had defrauded Esau twice, first stealing his birthright from him (when Jacob was too young to care) and then taking his blessing. As far as Jacob knows, Esau has been ruminating about these past episodes for the past twenty years. As long as Jacob does not return, Esau will likely be able to keep the entire inheritance from Isaac.

We do not know what Esau has in mind, but he has obviously been blessed in order to have 400 men to do his bidding. Esau himself not be certain what he has in mind. The 400 men will show him to be powerful and prosperous. He may be doing this intentionally to strike fear into Jacob's heart.

Now we will see Jacob react and wrestle within himself and wrestle with God was to his options.

### Jacob's Human Viewpoint

**Then Jacob divided the people who were with him and the flocks and the herds and camels into two companies, thinking "If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company which is left will escape." [Gen. 32:7b–8]**

When we fall into fear, the first thing that happens is that we are out of fellowship. When we are out of fellowship, we immediately resort to human viewpoint. Although it is not so stated here, Jacob certainly has ideas about how to split the companies up. He will certainly put himself and his wives and children into the company in the rear; this will be the company which will escape if the other company is destroyed. There is a certain lack of logic. If the first company is destroyed, how will he know? If he camps too close, then Esau could overtake him without any difficulty (remember, with 3 days head start, Laban still pursued and caught up with Jacob). A messenger running between the two camps could surely be followed by Esau's fastest men. If Esau destroyed the first camp and did not find Jacob, he would certainly continue to pursue Jacob—and with 400 men, it should be easy to comb the countryside to find Jacob.

It is not clear that Jacob fully appreciates this, but he is in a totally helpless situation. God often needs to put us in this position. If we have wandered from Him and His Word, then we do not know how to act under pressure. We do not know how to behave and whom to trust. We might hear advice from twenty people, twenty ideas, all human viewpoint, none of which will work. Jacob is trapped and you may not realize how trapped. He cannot go back; he and Laban set up a boundary between each other that they were not to pass over. There would have been no amount of soft-peddling to Laban concerning this boundary which would have worked. To the west we have the Mediterranean Sea and to the East there is desert.

God has already told Jacob to return to his homeland. As Jacob thinks more and more about his hopeless situation, he remembers that God sent him back to his homeland.

### Jacob Appeals to God to Intercede Between Himself and Esau

**Then Jacob said, "God of my father, Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, Who told me 'Return to your country and kindred and I will bless you.'" [Gen. 32:9]**

Nothing is more apropos to a life out of fellowship or a life of human viewpoint than a hopeless situation. Jacob doesn't have anywhere else to turn to. He realizes that his plan is as lame as they come. He realizes that he has nowhere to run to. He is trapped between Laban and Esau, between the desert and the Mediterranean. If he can't go to his left or right, or forward or backwards, Jacob can only go in one direction and that is up. He goes directly to God, the God who told him to go there.

Perhaps Jacob had this thought: *if God told him to return to his homeland then God must have some idea as to what to do about Esau.*

**"I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for I with only my staff, I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two companies." [Gen. 32:10]**

Jacob, when he ran from Esau originally, had nothing. God prospered him to the point to where he could actually split into two reasonably large camps. Obviously he did not have 400 men, but to be able to divide into two camps, he must have had approximately 40–50 men and an incredible number of cattle. We picture Jacob traipsing through this desert with his wives and children and a servant or two, but this verse, along with several others, indicates that he had a goodly number of servants.

This hopeless situation is causing Jacob to think about things spiritual. He has operated primarily on human viewpoint for the bulk of his life and now, in this hopeless situation, begins to reflect. It is not unlike a person's life flashing before him.

I recall in my Christian youth hearing about God's multifarious blessings and about the prosperity test and I often mused about either being given a great deal of prosperity or facing the prosperity test. Thieme had me convinced that if I stayed with God's Word, that I would be given prosperity (although it might not be material prosperity). I stayed with His Word, forgot about those things, and suddenly, one day, looked around me, and found that I had become much more successful than I had ever planned and had the material things that I desired without realizing it. I gained a great deal of appreciation for the grace that God gave me, even though when I was being blessed, I was not even cognizant of it.

Jacob is looking over his life. He left the land of Canaan on the run from Esau with only his staff and now he has enough people working for him to where he can split into two companies; he has 11 sons, a beautiful wife, a second wife and 2 mistresses. He has finally come to the place where he realizes that he has been blessed beyond his wildest dreams and he realizes that it is a matter of grace—he does not deserve what God has given him.

The Bible continually looks into the future and gives us a glance at what will be. Jacob, as representing the nation Israel, crossed over the Jordan (which is how the Jews will enter the land to take it), and eventually, they divided themselves into two nations. Jacob here is simply foreshadowing this.

**"Deliver me, I pray to You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he come and slay me, the mother with the children." [Gen. 32:11]**

Jacob recognizes that he is undeserving of what he has. He still appeals to God to deliver him, recognizing that God is the only One Who can deliver him. This is more than "God help me and I will do anything to repay you." That is a joke. Some people get themselves into the worst jam possible and then cry out to god for help. Once they are delivered, regardless of the promises and the vows that they made, they go back to the same old behavior problems and God is long forgotten once the pressure is off.

There are cases in the Bible where the prayers of some believers, particularly weak ones, are just that. And there would be reason to think that with Jacob, had it not been for vv. 9, 10 and 12. These verses tell us that Jacob is doing more than crying to God for help. In v. 9, he tells God that it was He who send Jacob back to his land of birth; in v. 10, he recognizes his lack of worth; in v. 12, he calls God on His promises. In other words, Jacob is doing a lot more than just crying to God for help. He is actually apply Bible doctrine to his circumstances!

And notice one thing which is extremely important: Jacob is not bargaining with God—You do this for me and I will begin tithing or I'll go to church more often or I'll say ten nice things about Esau every single day and tell him I love him when I see him. We don't trade off with God. There is nothing that we have which even begins to be a reasonable trade-off for His grace, protection and direction. We are totally undeserving and we have no capital with which to bargain. That is total arrogance on our part to think that God can be tempted by us throwing a measly 10% into his coffers, or by our lame promise to go visit the sick more often or to try to be nicer people. God is not a man that He should be tempted by this nonsense. God is not stupid, so He does not fall for our vows and promises. When He delivers us, we do not deserve it and we will never deserve it. God deals with us in grace and He deals with believers in the New and the Old Testament in grace. The sooner we come to realize that He has got everything under control and that we do not owe God anything, then we can live a much more relaxed life. We don't have to scheme, we don't have to promise, we don't have to do anything. If we have a desire to function in His plan in some form or another, then we need to immerse ourselves in His Word and God will direct our paths. If we choose not to, that's fine—we just need to be prepared for a lot of divine discipline to the point that we will beg for it to stop hurting.

**"And You declared, "I will do you good and make your descendants as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude." [Gen. 32:12]**

Here we see Jacob at his absolute best. God has made him several specific promises and Jacob clings to those promises. He calls God on His promises. He expects God to deliver him because God made these promises and God cannot keep these promises unless he delivers Jacob. God is glorified when we call Him on one of His promises; when we cite the Word (however, the passages we cite should not taken out of context, because in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all things be verified).<sup>85</sup>

All of Jacob's descendants are right there, along with his wives and mistresses. If God allows Esau to kill Jacob and the rest, then God cannot fulfill His promises to Jacob. God also promised that if Jacob returned to the land that God would prosper him. God cannot prosper Jacob if Jacob is killed the moment he sets foot in the land. So by God's promises, Jacob has nothing to worry about. So he calls God on these promises and that is a real spiritual step forward.

### **Jacob Depends upon His Own Human Viewpoint to Bring Peace Between Himself and Esau**

Unfortunately, Jacob, having thought doctrine for a short period of time, will almost immediately return to human viewpoint:

**So he lodged there that night and took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 milch [milking] camels and their colts; 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys." [Gen. 32:13–15]**

This starts out innocently enough. Jacob has chiseled Esau in the past; he has not seen his brother in twenty years and they left on bad terms. Therefore, a gift of some sort is reasonable. There is no problem with Jacob doing this. However, then he goes overboard. Whereas a gift for his brother, even an extravagant gift, is called for in the course of human protocol, Jacob loses sight of God and God's promise to him. He does not have to do anything to win Esau's approval. God has made him enough promises that he does not have to fear Esau. For all he knows, Esau may be bringing 400 men because he fears Jacob. He might be concerned that Jacob has returned to take his inheritance by force.

The number of animals that Jacob is willing to part with strikes me as being quite excessive, but then he is using human viewpoint to bribe Esau into not killing him. It seems that, in a matter of moments, he has totally forgotten about the promise of God. A gift of half that much would have been sufficient. However, what we do learn here is the extent of Jacob's wealth. We do not know how much he kept back, but he was able to spare this amount of livestock in order to appease one man, so we know that Jacob was rich, by ancient standards, almost beyond his wildest dreams.

**He delivered [these] into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me and put a space between drove and drove." He instructed the foremost, saying, "When Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong and where are you going and whose are these [livestock] before you?' Then you will say, 'To your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord, Esau. Furthermore, he [Jacob] is behind us.'" [Gen. 32:16–18]**

---

<sup>85</sup> This brings me to a personal theory. It is obvious that God has allowed His Word to become corrupted, albeit to a limited degree. God has allowed some men through incredible arrogance to add to His Word and others with equal arrogance to remove some words. There have been errors which have crept in due to the text not being updated regularly during the ancient world due to man's indifference. There have been errors by Scribes who have been out of fellowship (or unbelievers) as they copied the text, and thereby allowed errors to creep in. God has also raised up men with phenomenal dedication and spiritual gifts in the area of textual criticism, archeology, ancient languages, etc. who have given their entire lives to bring us the most accurate text possible. These are men who are incredible unsung heroes of the faith who will receive great reward in heaven. However, God has seen to it that every doctrine in Scripture—every passage that would affect our daily walk—can be found in two or three other places in God's Word, so that by two or three witnesses, all may be confirmed.

The excessiveness of the gift and the way that it is presented is strictly human viewpoint. What Jacob wants to do is to little by little decrease the anger and resentment which Esau may still carry toward him. Esau will ride a little, find a good sized group of asses. He will travel a little further and find the bulls and the cows. He will travel a bit further and come upon the camels. Some where along this ride, Esau will stop and ask who do these belong to; if they belong to the same man; what is he doing here? Then he will be told, by one of the first three groups that these are presents from his servant Jacob. This will calm Esau down somewhat; then, as he travels along further, he will come upon ewes and the rams and then the goats. Jacob is giving an excessive gift and he is packaging it in such a way to make it seem even larger. He does not present it in one large group but in several small groups so that, when Esau asks, he will think back to the previous groups and he will look forward to the next few groups. In terms of human viewpoint, there is nothing wrong with this plan. It is an intelligent, well-thought out plan. However, God did not inspire this plan, human viewpoint and fear inspired it. Jacob is doing this because after showing great confidence and a great spiritual wisdom for taking God at His Word, Jacob goes to sleep and wakes up out of fellowship and afraid again. So, rather than go back to God and His promises and assurances, Jacob devises a plan of his own. We are not enjoined in this life from thinking, from planning or from acting. However, we are to think, plan and act in accordance with God's will, purposes and promises. We are not to act out of fear for our fellow man or out from human viewpoint.

I recall a friend of mine, an unbeliever, had read through the Old Testament, and never read the New because she was so appalled by the violence and the killing of the Old Testament. She did not get the point. **The natural (wo)man does not understand the things of the Spirit, they are foolishness to him (her)** (1Cor. 2:14). Even the believer is not going to get much out of reading the Old Testament (or the New).

We were not designed to dig this information out by ourselves. I spent over twenty years under the ministry of R.B. Thieme, Jr. before I began recording this information and delving into Scripture myself directly (although there were a few times where I did an individual study here or there). **Now these things happened to them** [Israelites in the desert wanderings] **as an example; and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come** (1Cor. 10:6, 11). We learn a great deal from the Old Testament and a good pastor-teacher should never forsake teaching the Old Testament for a total immersion in the New. God has preserved both the Old and the New Testaments that we should benefit by them both. Remember, when the writers of the New Testament spoke of the inspiration of Scripture, they were referring primarily to the Old Testament, almost the only Scripture which existed when they wrote their own books and epistles. Under a good pastor-teacher, the Old Testament should make a great deal of sense and should be very relevant to our daily lives. New Testament writers continually quoted Old Testament Scriptures and paraphrased Old Testament occurrences.

When we exegete the Old Testament, we get to examine the spiritual giants and the spiritually retarded in their daily lives. We get to see their triumphs, their failures, their strengths and their weaknesses, and we, by means of their examples and by the control of the Holy Spirit, stand as examples, as living testaments to those around us. **You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and examined by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, ministered to under our authority, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tablets of stone, but on the tablets of human hearts** (2Cor. 3:2–3). And we have greater power than those saints would ever know in their lifetimes. Moses longed to see our day. We have the filling of the Spirit (a function similar to their enduement of the Spirit—which could be removed); and we have the entire Word Of God, which is of inestimable help to us. We certainly begin in the New Testament and the unbeliever, if not witnessed to directly, should begin by reading the book of John, the first five or six chapters.

Now, young growing believers can read anything that they want and will get practically nothing out of it. They will pull verses out of context; they will misapply verses, they will give improper emphasis to one verse over another. Young believers should be under the ministry of a well-trained, qualified pastor-teacher; this is how God designed for us to grow. Unbelievers and baby believers who immediately went to the word and tried to dig everything out for themselves resulted in cults, false directions and ruined lives. What we look for in a pastor-teacher is someone

who handles carefully and with respect God's Word and teaches it applying with the I.C.E.<sup>86</sup> principles. It is the ultimate of human arrogance to think that we, as immature believers in Jesus Christ, can go directly to God's Word and read a passage and have a good understanding of what it says. It takes a decent pastor years of study to where he can properly explain each passage and correlate each portion of god's Word with the rest of Scripture. It is even more arrogant to think that we can just open our Bible to any page, close our eyes, drop our finger on a verse, and suddenly find the recipe to cure what is presently ailing us.

Let me list the points that I am making here:

### Preparation by the Word of God

25. The Old Testament is as relevant to us today as it was to believers two, three or four millenniums ago.
26. Jacob's life, his successes (very few) and failures (the bulk of his life) are recorded objectively for us by Jacob himself that we might avoid some of the mistakes that he made in his life
27. We grow by being taught God's Word by a pastor who has been trained to teach His Word. This training may take place in a seminary, in a church, or in front of a tape recorder. Thieme said many times that it might take ten years of training to prepare a man for one good year of ministry.
28. We grow spiritually by being taught all of God's Word. A pastor must teach more than just salvation. Some pastors do nothing else but evangelize their congregation week after week after week. They might give a shallow sermon on Wednesday nights and make one or two points in the middle of evangelizing on Sunday night. Even though every pastor should do the work of an evangelist, he is to teach the entire Word of God. to the best of his ability.
29. When a pastor does nothing more than evangelize, he either (1) is in the wrong profession and should be an evangelist rather than a pastor (as Billy Graham decided early on in his ministry) or (2) he is not prepared well enough to be teaching. Often those in the latter category got saved, got excited, and wanted to share their salvation and faith with everyone they saw. They jumped into the position of pastor teacher prematurely. Some of these men might even have the gift and they will find out in eternity that they wasted the precious gift of God by not preparing first.
30. God uses prepared people. We find long preparation periods in the lives of Abraham, Moses, David and Paul. None of these spiritual giants got saved one day and the next day began their public ministry. I realize that perhaps there are men out there who are much greater than these four and do not feel that preparation is necessary for them. However, as an example to us, four of the greatest ment from the Old and New Testaments experienced intensive, long training prior to entering into a public ministry. Perhaps we should follow their examples.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**He [Jacob] likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, saying, "The same thing you will say to Esau when you meet him." Also you will say, "Furthermore, your servant, Jacob, [is] behind us." For he [Jacob] assumed, "I may appease him with the present that goes before me and afterwards I shall see his face [and] perhaps he will accept me."**  
[Gen. 32:19–20]

We don't even have to guess that this was human viewpoint. God tells us right here that this is human viewpoint. This is what Jacob thought or assumed. The verb in the Hebrew is the Qal perfect of 'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MAR*] and it primarily means to utter or to speak; however, it can also mean to think (it is often used in conjunction with *the heart*, meaning that someone is thinking in their heart). However, here, it is a simple bit of thinking which Jacob has performed, apart from divine revelation, apart from God's will. Jacob could have walked right up to Esau and slapped him in the face, if he so desired. God has made promises based upon His character and not upon Jacob's. Furthermore, these promises are made to Abraham his father and reiterated to him. God is not

<sup>86</sup> Isagogics (history), categories and exegesis (verse by verse and sometimes word by word studies, in context and in order in the book in which they were written)

going to withdraw His promises that He made to Abraham just because Jacob is a failure. In fact, throughout much of his life, Jacob is a failure and God did not revoke, nullify or modify His promises to Abraham.

It is okay to think, to plan and to act, as long as these things are done within the framework of doctrine. Jacob, although he showed great spiritual wisdom the night before, is now acting in unbelief.

**So the present passed on before him and he himself lodged that night in the camp. He arose the same night and took his two wives and his two mistresses and eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream and he sent over everything that he had.** [Gen 32:21–23]

This further illustrates the lack of faith that Jacob had. He is so worried that Esau, even after being given these gifts, will kill him and his family, despite what God has promised, he sets them and his possessions even further back so that they can make a run for it if necessary. We have already seen that Jacob has nowhere to turn to. He cannot go backward or to the left or to the right. So placing his family back a bit further is not really going to help. Recall, that with even three days of a head start, Laban traveling with his men, caught up with Jacob in a matter of seven days. So here we have a half a day's head start on Esau. How stupid. How faithless. Jacob is setting up all these contingency plans that, had he thought them through, would realize that they are not going to work.

### Jacob Wrestles with the Angel of God

Even though Jacob showed great promise the night before, after perhaps a restless sleep where he was overthinking everything; during asleep in which he did not just commit his problems to God; at a point in his life where he realized, at least for a short time that there were no human solutions to his problem, that he was in a hopeless situation, Jacob tries to deal with it using human viewpoint. He began a day or so ago with a great fear of Esau, then God wrestled that fear from him with His promises; then Jacob's evil nature wrestled those tremendous promises from God, ignored them, and began depending upon his own human ingenuity. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the cosmic system forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of evil in high places (Eph. 6:12). I am fleshly, led astray into bondage to sin.<sup>87</sup> For that which I am doing, I do not understand; because I am not practicing the thing I [would] like to [do], but I am doing the very thing that I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish [to do], I agree with the Law, that it is good. So, as the case stands: no longer am I the one doing it, but [the old] sin [nature] which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me—that is, in my flesh—for the desire is present in me, but the doing of the good [is] not. For the good that I wish to I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not desire [to do]. But if I am doing the very thing I do not desire [to do], I am no longer the one doing it, but [my old] sin [nature] which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who desires to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, which is in my members. Totally miserable man that I am! Who will release me from the body of this death? Thanks belongs to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh, the law of sin (Rom. 14b–25).** What I am hoping to establish here by quoting these few verses, and recalling the inner struggle that Jacob is having between believing the promises of God and acting upon them in faith or resorting to human viewpoint. Jacob is essentially wrestling within himself and he has allowed his human viewpoint to win over. God will have to wrestle him and recover the spiritual victory.

Now let me ask you—how many of you spiritually immature types or those who have been great Christians for five or ten years read this passage and understood why the Angel of God, Jesus Christ, wrestled with Jacob? It was a good spot in the Bible for a wrestling match? God just got so pissed off that He came down and kicked Jacob's butt? Perhaps Jacob, the writer, thought that there was not enough human drama in this passage, so Jacob threw in a little conflict? After being taught this, the whole chapter hangs together and makes sense and is relevant to

<sup>87</sup> The principal of the indwelling of Paul's old sin nature



your life. Some of you may have had God kick your butt. By yourself, you would not have wrestled this information from this passage. It would be another portion of the Word of God that you would read quietly, in a half-sleep, and give no more heed to it than the genealogies that you breeze through.

Now we know exactly why Jacob wrestles with Jesus Christ, the Angel of God. And just in case you don't have it, here it is in points:

### Why God Wrestles with Jacob

1. Jacob first revealed that he had a great fear of Esau.
2. The Jacob thought about God's promises and commission to him and called God to make good on these
3. Then Jacob slept on it, became fearful again, and devised a human viewpoint solution to the problem and a contingency plan.
4. Jacob is here in a desperate, hopeless situation and there is nothing he can do. So what does he do? Instead of trusting God's promises, he trusts his own bad judgment.
5. What we have here is Jacob wrestling within himself against God and God's Word. The New Testament mentions this fight, this war that we have, within ourselves and against the unseen powers of evil.
6. It looks like Jacob's human viewpoint has won this wrestling match.
7. However, this is not God's will for Jacob and Jacob has not only gotten out of God's directive will and has begun to move out of His geographical will, but Jacob has just crossed over God's overruling will.
8. This means that God Himself will intercede and will overrule Jacob's plan.
9. God will wrestle with Jacob once more and prevail and Jacob will remember this for the rest of his life because God will cause him to limp for the rest of his life due to this wrestling match.
10. If Jacob had gotten up that morning and again told God, "You promised me that You would prosper me and that you would make my progeny like the sand of the sea—and I am now putting You in charge and You must fulfill these promises made to me, my father Isaac, and my father Abraham"; if Jacob had done that, there would be no wrestling match and the latter half of Gen. 32 would not be here.
11. However, since Jacob's human nature wrestled his faith from him, God will wrestle that faith back.

No matter what Jacob decides to do, God's plan still moves forward.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**So Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.** [Gen. 32:24]

One moment Jacob is out of fellowship in fear of Esau, then he remembers God's promises to him. Then he sleeps on these promises and wakes up with human viewpoint. Jacob has just escorted his family a half a day to a day's journey away and is returning to his other men and the presents that he has set up for Esau. He is about ready to go to sleep again, midway between the two camps, when Jesus Christ wrestles him.

**When He saw that He did not prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh and Jacob's thigh was pulled out of joint as He wrestled with him.** [Gen. 32:25]

Jacob had resisted God's promises and God's will the night before and he was resisting these again until it was clear that Jacob was not going to trust God. So God had to pull his hip out of joint. Now Jacob realizes what is happening and Who he is wrestling.

**Then He said, "Let Me go, for the day is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless You bless me." And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." [Gen. 32:26–27]**

God has given Jacob free will and allows Jacob to employ it. God puts Jacob's hip out of joint in discipline to Jacob. Jacob realizes Who he is wrestling, calls upon his faith again, and demands that God bless him. This time Jacob is not asking Isaac to bless him through some means of duplicity, but Jacob hangs desperately onto God for his life, calling upon God to fulfill His Word to him.

God knows who Jacob is. God does not ask questions to gain information. He asks us questions to make us think. Jacob knows what his name is and he knows what it means. He is thinking about his name and his general manipulative character and God speaks to him:

**Then He said, "No longer will you be called Jacob but Israel, for you have wrestled with God and with men and you have prevailed." [Gen. 32:28]**

It is not Jacob's sin nature which has prevailed here, but his Godly nature, his spiritual side. God had to physically hurt him in discipline, but Jacob prevails because he holds God to His promises. God must bless him because God has promised that to Jacob.

In the Hebrew, Israel is Yis<sup>o</sup>râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced *yis-raw-ALE*] and it is closely related to the words *yâshar* (יָשָׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAR*] (and this means *moral, uprightness, straightness*)<sup>88</sup> and *sârâh*<sup>89</sup> (שָׂרָה) [pronounced *saw-RAW*] and this word means *to persevere, prevail*. The latter word is found in this verse and in Hosea 12:4–5. Because this word is found so little in Scripture, its meaning is tougher to ascertain (and this may not be the last word on it). However, as we see in Hosea 12:4–5, Jacob began fighting the world (in this case, his brother) from the time that they were in the womb together, up until that day. Jacob was always in contention with someone and continually used human viewpoint and his ability to manipulate to wrestle Esau's possession from him, to outsmart others. However, as long as he operated in the realm of the flesh, he did not prevail. However, this time, after Jesus Christ broke his hip, he held on and kept on holding on, holding God to His promises. His situation got so hopeless here, that not only was he waiting for Esau to come and kill him (which he expected—otherwise, he would not have moved his family), and now Jesus Christ comes and kicks his butt. He has got nowhere else to turn to except to demand that God fulfill His promises to him by blessing him. So, finally, in this most hopeless of hopeless situations, Jacob prevails. He recognizes Who he has been fighting all these years and now will not let our Lord go without His blessing. His blessing—His Word—will give Jacob that assurance that he needs to keep him until morning.

Do you see how this defines the entire history of Israel? Israel will wrestle against God throughout almost their entire history—throughout the night. Israel is thick-headed, determined, and stubborn; yet God will prevail; and when daylight comes, God will bless all Israel.

Do you see how this is analogous to our own existence? We are also thick-headed, determined and stubborn. Prior to our coming to Him, we wrestle against God—we oppose Him in any way that we can; yet, by morning, He will prevail and, as a result, we will be greatly blessed.

Now, don't misunderstand me: what happened here is literal and historical; however, this does not mean that God is not teaching us by analogy. One of the great analogies of Scripture is when God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son—this incident literally happened in exactly the way that the Bible tells us that it happened. However, it also tells us that God would send His only Son, His firstborn, to die as a sacrifice for us. The substitutionary death of the scapegoat in Gen. 22 is the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. God sees to it that actual historical events which have taken place and are recorded in Scripture also teach us (and Israel) about God's plan.

**Then Jacob asked, saying, "Please tell me your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And He blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, "For I have seen God face to face and yet my life is preserved." [Gen. 32:29–30]**

According to Hosea 12:4–5, Jacob wrestled with the angel (which is Jesus Christ). Peniel (or Penuel) means *the face of God*. Jacob does not ask for a miracle; does not ask how he will be delivered—in fact, he does not, even face to face with God, ask God to deliver him. He asks for God's blessing. He will hold onto this blessing, which

<sup>88</sup> We know that this was partially what *Israel* connotes, as the Bible often refers to Israel with the *poetic* name *y<sup>e</sup>shûruwn* (יְשׁוּרוּן) [pronounced *yesh-oo-ROOM*]

<sup>89</sup> Yes, this is the name that you think it is

is what he should have done before. He will hold onto this blessing and claim this promise of blessing from God and that will get Jacob through the next 24 hours.

**The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his thigh. Therefore, the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip, which is upon the hollow of the thigh to this day, because He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew of the hip.** [Gen. 32:31–32]

To help Jacob remember this night, God permanently injured Jacob. Some of us are very hard-headed and the only way that God can get through to us is through pain; in this case, a permanent injury. This is because of God's great love for Jacob. He has a perfect plan for Jacob's life and Jacob plays an important role in God's plan. Therefore, God sometimes has to use what would seem on the surface to be harsh measures. As for the tradition of not eating the sinew of the hip, this is a way that the Israelites would recall and tell this story to their children and to their children.

Notice the phrase *as he passed Penuel* in v. 31. He just named that area Penuel. Now how is he passing it? He went back and got his wives and his children. Jacob is trusting God. As he limps, he trust God all the more.

From here we must immediately proceed to Gen. 33 without taking a breather. It is important because Jacob originally planned to keep his children and wives and mistresses far behind him. He had traveled not too far from there that night until he met Jesus Christ and was knocked about. So he returns to them and to bring them with him.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 33** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 33

### Genesis 33:1–20

The outline for this chapter is simple:

- vv. 1–15     **Jacob and Esau meet**
- vv. 16–20   **Jacob moves to Succoth and then to Shechem**

Maps, Charts and Short Doctrines:

- v.     17     **Map of Canaan and Paddan-aram**

**Introduction:** Chapter 33 is an immediate continuation of Gen. 32. This chapter is very short and requires very little exegesis. There should not have even been a chapter break here. Jacob first placed his wives, mistresses and children on the other side of the river. Then he begins to go back toward his other encampments, but is met by the angel of God, Jesus Christ, Who wrestles him and dislocates his hip. He names that area Penuel and then returns to get his family. As he passes through Penuel again, then he sees Esau coming with his 400 men. Now his wives and children are with him, representing a change of heart.

### Jacob and Esau Meet

**Then Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked and saw [lit., behold] Esau coming and with him 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids and he put the maids with their children in front; then Leah with her children behind [them] and Rachel and Joseph last of all.** [Gen. 33:1–2]

Here we have a little faith-rest. Jacob is able to trust God and place his children and his wives along the road to meet up with Esau. God has told him that his progeny would be like the sand of the sea so Jacob decides to believe this. When he places his children and wives in front, he was not creating a barrier (recall, he only the previous day, had left them by themselves on the other side of the river) but calling on God to prove that He would fulfill his promises to him.

**Then he, himself, went forward [lit., on] before them, bowing himself seven times until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him and they wept.** [Gen. 33:3–4]

Jacob had done his brother wrong at least twice (two times which were significant) and it had been twenty years since they had seen one another. Esau could have allowed this situation cause ill will to fester for all these years or he could have taken the high road, which he did. Jacob never did have any dislike or animosity toward Esau that we know of; he was just a person that he chose to use and manipulate (let's say that it was more of a lack of respect). It has been only over the past few years where Jacob has exhibited some spiritual growth to where he began to look upon his brother as a person, and therefore with some measure of respect. Of course, when he heard that Esau was coming with 400 men, that became a very healthy respect.

**When he raised his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" And he said, "The children whom God has graciously given [to] your servant." [Gen. 33:5]**

What Esau sees is not an army of men to meet him but Jacob's family, whom Jacob has placed at Esau's mercy. Jacob can do that because of God's specific promises to him. We find in Jacob some serious measure of understand of God's plan here—he understands that these children and wives are a gracious gift from God, as well as his great possessions and wealth. He also seems to understand that he and his family have a future in God's plan.

I need to make an aside at this point. Actually, this is a parallelism which could have been brought out at any time in the previous several chapters or in the next few chapters. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all dwelt in tents. They had been given the promised land by God's promise, but it had not been delivered to them. So they inhabited temporary homes awaiting their permanent residence. We as believers also occupy a temporary residence, our bodies as we await our resurrection bodies. In this way, the promised land is both real and a shadow of the good things to come.

**Then the maids drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise drew near and her children and bowed down and last Joseph drew near and Rachel and they bowed down. [Gen. 33:6–7]**

Then entire family took from Jacob's precedence and all of them showed great deference to Esau. They were likely confused as Jacob first sets up his two camps and sets up a parade of gifts and then he hides his family. And suddenly, he takes them with him toward Esau and bows down to Esau.

Joseph, the youngest, was apparently impressed by all that was occurring and he moved ahead of his mother, who, by way of conversations with Jacob possibly feared Esau (Rachel would have known more about what Jacob was thinking than any other wife). Joseph, not privy to these conversations and too young to understand all that was going on, moved forward quickly.

**Then, he [Esau] said, "What did you mean by all this company which I met?" And he answered, "To find grace in the sight of my lord." [Gen. 33:8]**

Esau was polite in this, but in the back of his mind, remembering Jacob as he was, may have even been thinking, "What the hell is he trying to pull this time?"

Esau's show of force of 400 men was certainly to impress Jacob, but not to overpower him. Esau brought the men along just in case. He did not know what he was going to find with Jacob and had no idea as to what Jacob would do. Jacob left under some very negative circumstances after causing Esau a great deal of grief, so Esau did not know what to expect. Whatever came his way, Esau was ready to handle it.

**But Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." [Gen. 33:9]**

Esau has become quite wiser in his older age. He has already been duped by Jacob twice and is understandably suspicious of whatever Jacob might have in mind.

Jacob's gift to Esau was not one of love or friendship or deference, but one given in order to manipulate Esau or to appease Esau. It was therefore a gift which was given with strings. Esau didn't know exactly what was occurring, but he was no doubt careful about Jacob's manipulation techniques. Remember, this was probably a goodly part of Jacob's wealth, and the livestock were all set up in parade of sorts. Jacob did not come out to meet Esau directly but set up this parade of gifts first. Esau was understandably taken aback and he was properly suspicious (Scripture does not tell us that Esau is suspicious or even reticent; I have made that assumption).

**Jacob said, "No, if I have found grace in your sight, then please [lit., I pray you] accept my present from my hand for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God; which such grace, you**

**have received me. Please accept my gift that is brought to you because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have enough." In this way, he urged him and he took it. [Gen. 33:10–11]**

Perhaps Jacob is operating under a bit of emotion, but, at the same time, he is now giving these animals to Esau as a gift and not as a bribe. The simple definition of grace is *undeserved favor*. In our dispensation, it is everything which God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross. The greeting from Esau which Jacob is receiving is undeserved.

Jacob himself was often a manipulating scheming son-of-a-bitch who cared about no one but himself. What it took was 20 years with a man who was even more self-centered, even more manipulating and duplicitous, to help to give Jacob a clue as to what he was like. Then it took God's promises and a permanent injury from Jesus Christ to begin to orient Jacob to life and to God's grace.

Jacob's journey is not going to be continually advancing toward the high ground; he will stumble many times. However, he will apparently impart enough spiritual information to Joseph to last a lifetime.

We have not seen Jacob or Esau behave in this way towards one another before.

**Then he said, "Let us journey and let us go and I will go before you." But then he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds giving suck are a care to me and if they are over-driven for one day, they will die—all the flocks. Please let my lord pass on before his servant and I will lead on according to gentleness according to the pace of the property which are before me; according to the children until I come to my lord in Seir." [Gen. 33:12–14]**

What Jacob is asking for is for Esau to be on his way, travel at his normal pace, and Jacob will eventually join him. Jacob cannot move near as quickly as Esau and his 400 men, since Jacob has children and animals. However, the real problem is, Jacob has just returned to the land promised his line by God. How can he leave it now?

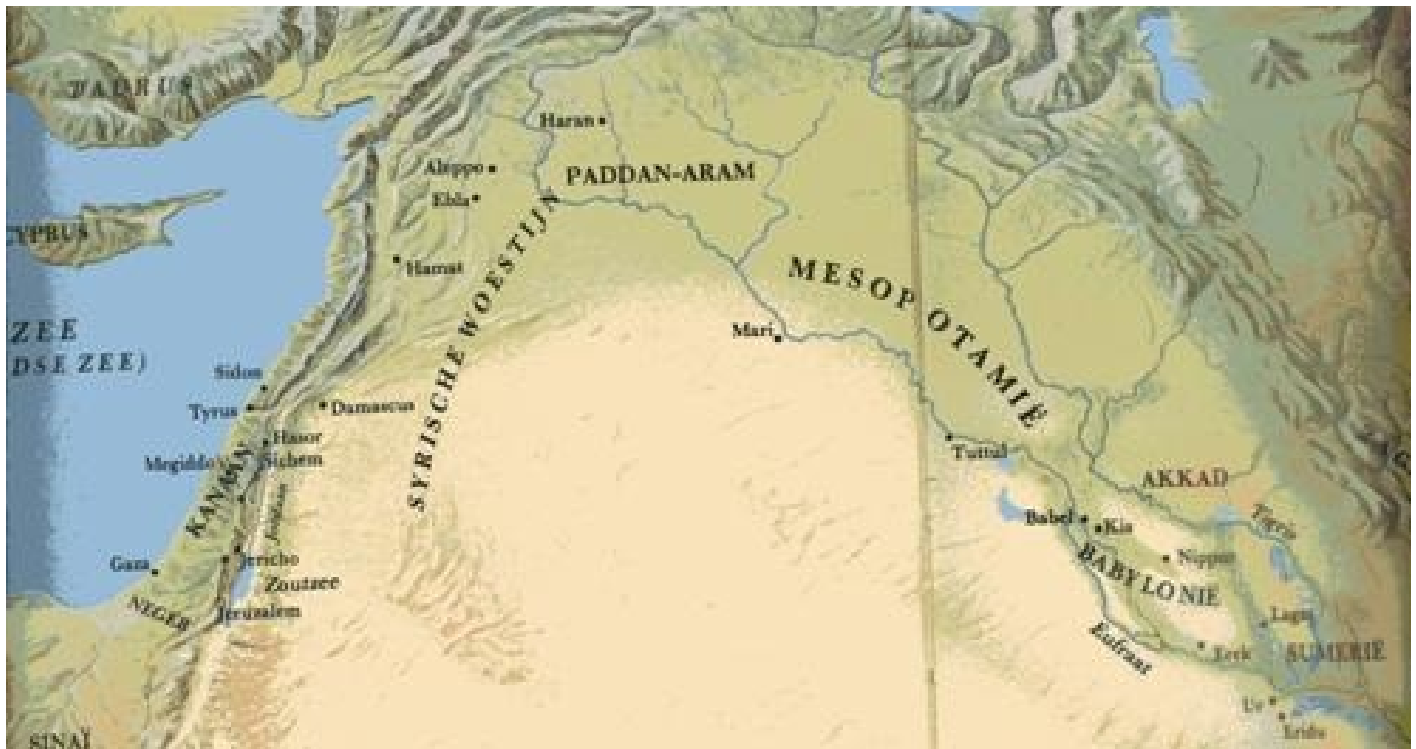
**So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the men who are with me. But he said, "What need is there?" Let me find grace in the sight of my lord." [Gen. 33:15]**

Esau, although he is more at ease than he was before, is still a bit uncertain about Jacob and understandably suspicious. For awhile, whatever Jacob says, Esau will explore for ulterior motive. There is nothing wrong with this. Esau knows Jacob and how Jacob was. It is possible after all these years that he has turned over a new leaf and it is possible that he hasn't. Esau is merely combining some normal caution with his graciousness.

### **Jacob Moves to Succoth and then to Shechem**

**So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir but Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built himself a house and he made a barn [lit., booths] for his cattle. Therefore, the name of that place is called Succoth. [Gen. 33:16–17]**

As you can see by the map below, Esau came from due South, probably up the King's Highway, and he will return due south. Jacob has traveled in generally southwesterly direction up to the River Jabbok, which he basically follows east toward the Jordan River. From Succoth, he will cross the Jordan to Shechem and then move south. He will be in the land between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean and his brother will be south of the Dead Sea. They will be a comfortable distance from one another.



### Map of Canaan and Paddan-aram.

Image from <http://www.bijbelseplaatsen.nl/oude+website/plaatsen/Paddan%20Aram.htm>

**Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram and he camped before the city and he bought the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father for a hundred pieces of money. There he erected an altar and he called it El-Elohe-Israel [lit. God, the God of Israel]. [Gen. 33:18–20]**

Shechem was already an established city, but really more like a village—possibly of just one family. It appears that the father, Hamor, named the city after his firstborn son (or vice versa), which could have been named after one of his ancestors who founded the city.

This is the first city in the land which is mentioned in the Bible. Abraham travels through it back in Gen. 12:6. Jacob had been reading the Scriptures (which is what we have studied so far) and this was the first recorded place where God spoke to Abram and promised to give his descendants the land there. Having recently wrestled with the God of Israel and knowing of the history and the promises, Jacob decides that this would be a good place to settle.

There is a minor problem here with the translation in v. 20. Jacob did not erect an altar. In Scripture, one *builds* (banah) an altar. There are a few exceptions: in Gen 35:1, 3 Ex. 30:1, altars are *made* (asah) and in 1Kings 16:32 an altar is *raised* or *set up*, as a building (kum is the Hebrew word). The Hebrew word used and which is translated *to raise* or *to erect* is the Hiphil imperfect of nātsab (נָצַב) [pronounced *naw-TSAB*]. Natsab has a variety of applications, but in the Hiphil imperfect, it is used in conjunction with erecting a pillar (Gen. 35:14, 20 2Sam. 18:18) but **not** in conjunction with erecting an altar. What has happened here is that there was a mistake in the transcribing at some point in time and wrote mizbêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced *miz-BAY-akh*] instead of matstsêbâh (מַצְטֵבָה) [pronounced *mats-tsay-BAW*] from memory, from a mistake in hearing or from using mem to abbreviate for matstsebah and then it was filled in with mizbeach instead. The point of all this is that Jacob did not erect an altar, but he *pillared a pillar* or *set up a pillar*.

A pillar was used as a memorial stone (Gen. 35:20 2Sam. 18:18), as a boundary between two disputing factions (Gen. 31:45) and as a pillar with some religious significance (Gen. 28:18 33:20 2Kings 17:10 10:26).

---

---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---



**Genesis 34** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 34

### Genesis 34:1–31

This chapter may be broken down as follows:

Vv. 1–3	<b>The rape of Dinah</b>
Vv. 4–12	<b>Hamor asks that Dinah be given in marriage to his son, Shechem, the rapist</b>
Vv. 13–18	<b>The sons of Jacob set up false standards for the criterion to be met by the men of Shechem</b>
Vv. 19–24	<b>Hamor and Shechem Present the Requirements of Jacob's Family to Their People</b>
Vv. 25–31	<b>Levi and Simeon murder the men of Shechem and then plunder the town /Jacob's response</b>

**Introduction:** Chapter 34 begins to deal with Jacob's sons. Enough time has passed to where many of them are now adults making (bad) adult decisions. Because Jacob only has recently been moved toward things spiritual, he did not raise his sons as properly as he should have. Therefore, they do not behave as they should have.

Furthermore, even though the Jewish race will come from all 12 brothers, the line of promise will go through only one of the sons of Jacob. So, one of the important aspects to the narrative of Joseph's life is, through which brother will that line go.

In chapter 34, we also have the spoiled son of the prince who gets whatever he wants. He rapes the daughter of Jacob. After he rapes her, he decides that he wants her, so he gets his father to discuss marriage with Jacob. The brothers agree to this as long as the men of Shechem are circumcised. They agree to this. So, soon after the men are circumcised and in physical pain, two of Jacob's sons, Levi and Simeon, go into the city and kill all the recently-circumcised males. This is one of those chapters where no one, other than Jacob<sup>90</sup>, does anything right, not unlike the book of Judges. Be prepared to see the early Jews at their very worst.

### The Rape of Dinah

**Now Dinah, the daughter of Leah whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land and when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite the prince of the land saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her.** [Gen. 34:1–2]

The last verb in this passage is Piel imperfect of 'ânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced *aw-NAW*]. The Piel stem is the intensive stem and it means *to humble, to mishandle, to afflict*. It is specifically used several times in the Bible to indicate forcible rape. The first two verbs, in the Qal stem, which is the simple action, simple meaning stem, mean *to seize and to lay*; alone, these two verbs would have indicated mutual consent. The last verb, in the Piel, indicates that this is a criminal act.

They were in what was then the land of Canaan; Canaan was a son of Ham, who was a son of Noah. The Hivites were descendants of one of the sons of Canaan (Gen. 10:1, 6, 15–17). They lived in the city of Shechem, which

<sup>90</sup> That is quite a change, is it not?

was probably named after Hamor's son, Shechem. This is not really a city, but barely a village, which appears to be the compound of one family, who have, by whatever means, have laid claim to a large piece of land in Canaan.

The son Shechem was a degenerate bully who had been overindulged by his parents and allow pretty much a free reign from a young age. Having the same name as the city, he pretty much thought that he was hot stuff from age 5 or 6 on. His parents also thought that he was a wonderful young man and they gave him everything except for moral training and guidance. We have a generation like that from the 1980's and 90's (which is when I first made these observations<sup>91</sup>). Shechem's parents found him amusing from a very young age, and laughed at many of the things that he did, even though some showed lack of direction and lack of parental guidance. As he became older, his father gave him every advantage in life that was material, being the ruler of the land—every advantage except for moral training and discipline. It is possible that his mother is no longer even on the scene and his father had no time to properly raise him, so he spoiled him instead. No matter what the causes, he was raised to become a self-indulgent, vicious criminal who needed to be executed (his background is a matter of pure conjecture on my part; the fact that he is a self-indulgent, vicious criminal will be brought out in the narrative which follows).

We know that he is a self-indulgent criminal from v. 2; he sees Dinah, who came into the city to apparently visit her the females of the land (we do not know if she had any sisters; other daughters of Jacob, if any existed, are not mentioned in Scripture). We will know from the following verses that he was used to getting whatever he wanted and that his father gave him whatever he wanted; and his father would clean up his messes after him. This is the first *recorded* rape in the Bible (although what occurred back in Gen. 6 possibly involved rape in some cases).

As the son of the prince of the land, Shechem would have had wealth and possessions and would likely, despite an apparent lack of training, have had a great choice of women from the land. It is possible that he was not much more than a teenager at this time (or our moral equivalent of a young teen without training). Dinah was apparently quite attractive to him so rather than making an attempt to engage her in conversation; rather than let it be known in the conversation who he was and that he had an interest in her, he just raped her instead. He showed no concern for her volition or her well-being. We do not know what led to the event, where it occurred or anything like that. We only know that his had complete and total disregard for her as a person and criminally assaulted her and should have been criminally prosecuted for this act and then executed.

**However, his soul was drawn to Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. He loved the maiden and spoke tenderly to her** [lit., *spoke to the heart of the maiden*] [Gen. 34:3]

How Dinah felt was not an issue to him. Who she was and what her volition was were not important issues to him. It is very likely that he knew Dinah already and was aware of her existence. He had possibly seen her come into town before and, since his father sold some land to Jacob, he knew the family to a limited degree (or knew of the family). For all we know, Shechem may have even been stalking Dinah, paying close attention, when possible, to notice her movements.

They lived in a very rural sort of area populated essentially by two families, the sons (and daughters) of Jacob and the sons (and daughters) of Hamor. There may have been other small groups of people scattered here or there. If you have ever been brought up in a small town, you will find out that everyone knows everyone else's business. There is not much to talk about except for what everyone else is doing—and there just is not many *everybody else's* to concern oneself with.

Shechem was physically attracted to Dinah from either a previous meeting or sighting or from during the time that he met her here and then took her off and raped her. Interestingly enough, after raping Dinah, Shechem became more attracted to her. Within the confines of his shallow heart, he loved Dinah—or at least what he perceived that she could do for him. Such a person is incapable of true soul love. It is theoretically possible that such a person,

---

<sup>91</sup> It is now the year 2016, and each subsequent generation appears to be getting worse.

if he were saved and then very positive toward God's Word, could grow into a decent human being, given 4 or 5 years of intensive discipline training under God's Word. However, such a thought is theoretical.

A correct system of law would proscribe the death penalty for all those committing forcible rape (which does not include statutory rape) is by far the best way to deal with this kind of behavior—no matter how much such a one promises to behave or how much he is willing to do for the maiden afterwards.

In his very small soul, Shechem does feel an affinity for Dinah and it is as overpowering as his initial lust for her. He is a child who is used to getting whatever he wants when he wants. He may be a child of thirty or forty in this passage. A decent parent would have placed Shechem in a holding cell, presided over the criminal trial (as his father could have done) and then had him executed. However, we do not know how much his father, Hamor, actually knew about the circumstances of Shechem's encounter with Dinah.

### **Hamor Asks That Dinah Be Given in Marriage to His Son, Shechem, the Rapist**

**So Shechem spoke to his father, Hamor, saying, "Get me this maiden to wife." [Gen. 34:4]**

Throughout many of the previous passages, we have had a particle of entreaty used. The KJV translates that particle as *I pray thee* and I have often translated it as *please*. We find this particle last used in Gen. 33:14 & 15. It is not found here. The verb is the Qal imperative, 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular of lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAKH*] and it means to take, but with a wide variety of applications.. The same word is used in Gen. 34:2 when Shechem *seized* her. He now wants his father to take this woman on his behalf to wife. He seized her personally, and now is asking his father to seize her on his behalf.

In contrast to Reuben's leadership, Shechem reveals his intent to lead, but essentially for his own benefit. He goes to his father and tells him, "Get me this young woman to be my wife." It is a sad situation indeed when the son (even the oldest son) tells the father what to do. This would be the case even if there had been no rape involved. He orders his father to seize this woman on his behalf so that he could marry her. This was to go through the proper channels, of course, but it is his father is receptive to what Shechem wants and he will do what Shechem wants.

In any case, this is how we know that the father is overindulgent. Whether he knows about the rape at this point in time is immaterial. It is simply the fact that his son orders him to do something and then he does it. He is a man who wants the very best for his child, yet does not have the wisdom to take responsibility for properly bringing up his child in this world. Part of a parent's duty is properly raising a child, which includes discipline and spanking when necessary; and firm, clear guidance in the field of right and wrong. The rape was as much the fault of Hamor as it was the fault of Shechem. Shechem has been trained to take whatever he wants; and, if necessary, have his father take for him that which he demands.

The middle Assyrian law codes of that era did require a man who raped an unmarried virgin to marry this woman and it is possible that this was part of Shechem's plan to obtain this woman. However, if they operated under or if they were cognizant of that law, it is not revealed here. Furthermore, such a law was at best a rationalization for Shechem to marry this woman that he lusted after.

**Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah, his daughter; but her sons were with his cattle in the field. Jacob caused himself to be silent until they came. [Gen. 34:5]**

*Defiled* is the Hebrew word *ṭāmê'* (טָמַא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*] and it means *to foul, to make unclean, to defile, to contaminate, to pollute*. It is in the Piel stem and a word used in the Bible to indicate sexual [as well as other kinds of] defilement, though not always by rape (such as, Ezek. 18:6, 11, 15).

The Hiphil perfect of *chârash* (חָרַשׁ) [pronounced *khaw-RASH*] has two fairly divergent meanings: it means *to engrave or to cut ro to plough* and it means *to be silent*. The Hiphil is the causative stem and it means that the

subject participates in the action as a second subject. The emphasis is upon the action itself rather than upon the results of the action (that would be the Piel). The Hiphil is sometimes used in the reflexive sense, and that is how it is used here.

This is a nightmare for a father. The son of the man he bought his land for; the son of a high ranking man in the neighboring town.

It is not clear how Jacob found out; and it is not clear whether he sent for his sons or not (it appears that he did). Jacob would have found out about the rape from Hamor, Shechem or from someone else. Did messengers precede Hamor and Shechem, and did they tell what happened? Did Hamor or Shechem tell Jacob and add, "But we can rectify this situation." Or did one of the women that Dinah visited see or hear what happened, and then she informed Jacob? The last possibility seems the most likely. If Dinah is being kept in the Shechem compound (which appears to be the case), then a sympathetic servant may have traveled to tell Jacob what is going on.

It appears by the narrative the Jacob contacted his sons, told them what was going on, and they came back to the compound at roughly the same time that Hamor and Shechem arrived. This would suggest that Jacob heard this news from someone else then (a friend of Dinah's or a sympathetic servant), which would have given Jacob the time to send for his sons. And then Hamor and Shechem arrive at his door step (that is, at the entryway of his tent).

Jacob does not act irrationally and he allows himself some time to think. Even when Hamor and Shechem are there, with the proposition, Jacob is quietly listening, probably seething with anger, but doing nothing. Nothing will get resolved by running off half-cocked. He is waiting for his sons when Hamor and Shechem arrive.

When the Law is instituted, rape will be punishable by death (Deut. 22:25–26).

**Also, Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out to Jacob to speak with him.** [Gen. 34:6]

Here we see Shechem's problem. His father is overindulgent. He goes out to do his son's bidding. He should be going to Jacob and ask him at what time would it be convenient for him to attend the execution of his son. He should be coming to inform Jacob of a trial date. At worst, he should be going to beg for the life of his son. This is assuming that Hamor is aware of what happened. He may not know that Shechem raped Jacob's daughter.

In any case, it appears that, whatever his son wants, Hamor will do what he can to obtain it for him. His son needed directions and guidance as a youngster and his father failed to give him that; his father failed to raise him properly.<sup>92</sup> So now, out of guilt, recognizing that his son is the way he is out of neglect, he tries to overcompensate by giving him whatever his son wants. In teaching school, I see kids all the time with more material possessions than I could have imagined as a boy; but with no guidance or direction or discipline. We have felons in our high school system, caught at the scene of the crime, some accused of armed robbery, that populate some of our schools. Some of these are a result of overindulgent parents and some are a result of an overindulgent legislature with no concept of reality.

**The sons of Jacob also came in from the field. When they heard of it, the men were indignant and extremely angry because he [Shechem] had done such an amoral, disgraceful thing in Israel to lie with Jacob's daughter because such a thing ought not to be done.** [Gen. 34:7]

N<sup>o</sup>bâlâh (הַלְבֹן) [pronounced *neb-aw-LAW*] is translated *senselessness, disgraceful thing, folly, disgraceful deed*. It is difficult to put a one word definition to it. It is an act which shows complete disregard for moral and/or religious standards (see Deut. 22:21 Judges 19:25 20:6, 10 2Sam. 13:12). It is used to describe the words and actions of Job's *friends* in Job 42:8. I used three words to translate it: *amoral, disgraceful thing*.

<sup>92</sup> I am assuming this, based upon Shechem's actions.

The bēyth (ב) conjunction preceding Israel is interesting. It has several classes of meanings: *in, at, by, with*. The translators of the Septuagint used the Greek verb ἐν (en), which means *in*, to translate it. Recall that Israel is not a country as of yet; Israel consists of Jacob, two wives, two mistresses, 12 children (at least) and a large number of servants and hired help. However, in God's eyes, this is His nation Israel, in its most infant stage—and although a writer from outside Jacob's family would not see this as a nation or as a place, God the Holy Spirit so directed Jacob to write this as not the God-given name to him but as the God-given name to his nation.

The sequence of events here is that (1) Jacob hears about what happened to his daughter; (2) Jacob sends word to his sons in the field, telling them what had happened; (3) Hamor and Shechem come to Jacob to propose marriage; (4) Jacob's sons arrive from the field; (5) Jacob's sons make a proposition.

Prior to the law, man had a sense of right and wrong, and what had been done here was terribly wrong. Jacob's family easily understood that.

**However, Hamor spoke with them, saying, "Shechem, my son—his soul longs for your daughter. I ask of you, please give her to him for a wife." [Gen. 34:8]**

Can you imagine anything worse than Shechem as a husband? On his very first meeting, he rapes Dinah, and now has the audacity to ask for her hand in marriage. How his father could ask such a thing is almost beyond understanding (this is assuming that the father knew what happened).

This situation gives us an idea as to why the men of Canaan were later marked for complete annihilation by God the Father. They were degenerate beyond belief. At this point in time, their degeneracy had not become full. Hamor is speaking to the entire family here.

**"Furthermore, intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves." [Gen. 34:9]**

This suggests that both families have a number of daughters. Upon coming to Jacob's ranch, it is obvious that Jacob is quite prosperous. Intermarriage with a prosperous family makes complete sense.

**"And you will dwell with us and the land shall be open for you to dwell and trade in it; to get property in it." [Gen. 34:10]**

Hamor is doing whatever is possible to sweeten the pot. He invites Jacob to function just as any other citizen there.

This suggests that Hamor knows a little something about Jacob's family, that they do not actually own any land in Canaan. So, offering them something which they do not have seems like a smart sales approach.

**Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find grace in your eyes and whatever you say to me, I will give. Ask of me ever so much as a marriage present and gift and I will give [it] according to what you say to me—only give the maiden to be my wife." [Gen. 34:11–12]**

It appears that Shechem has learned from his father when you want something, you pay for it. If you have enough money, you can buy anything. No matter what it is that you want, there is a price for it. This is how Hamor taught Shechem. Some people truly believe this.

It is likely that Hamor has bailed Shechem out of jams before. Being a prominent man of the city, which both political prominence, as well as financial prominence, Hamor was able to bail Shechem out of any jam that he got himself into and pay for whatever damage that he had caused. This is how Shechem knows to deal with situations he has gotten himself into and how to get what it is that he wants. He offers money or things of a financial benefit. There is not a word said about this rape or about Dinah's feelings. Shechem has just said, "I know you have a

price; I happen to have my dad's checkbook. What is your price?" Shechem is a vulgar man who deserves to be executed for his actions concerning Dinah, and shunned for his arrogance.

### **The Sons of Jacob Set up False Standards for the Criterion to Be Met by the Men of Shechem**

**The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully and said, because he had defiled Dinah, their sister—they said, to them, "We cannot do this thing to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised [lit., to him a foreskin], for that would be a disgrace to us. Only on this condition will we consent to you that you will become as we are—every male of you be circumcised."** [Gen. 34:13–15]

Deceit seems to be almost a genetic trait in this family. Abraham and Isaac were deceitful concerning their wives when they went into foreign lands. Jacob and Laban were both exceptional at duplicity. We should not be surprised to hear that Jacob's sons speak deceitfully to Hamor and Shechem. We are told immediately that they spoke deceitfully. This means that whether or not they have a plan, giving their sister Dinah is not a part of this plan. There is apparently a general understanding of what circumcision is and what is involved.

**"Then we will give our daughters to you and we will take to ourselves [wives from you] and we will dwell with you and become one people. However, if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."** [Gen. 34:16–17]

What this sounds like to Hamor and Shechem is some sort of a symbolic gesture. The Jews are circumcised and if the town of Shechem is circumcised, then they will all be as one family. This is a few days of discomfort and no money out of anyone's pocket. This seems reasonable to them. Even though they are willing to buy whatever it is that they want and throw money at any problem that they have caused, it is even better when this costs nothing. This allows them to have more money to do whatever it is that they want. Furthermore, these boys do not offer any alternative. I say, *boys*. If Dinah is the youngest and has reached sexual maturity, then these are young men, mostly 20 and older.

### **Hamor and Shechem Present the Requirements of Jacob's Family to Their People**

**Their proposition pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son [more lit., their words looked fair in the eyes of Hamor and (in the eyes of) Shechem Hamor's son] and the young man did not delay to do this because he had a delight in Jacob's daughter. Now he was honored more than all his family.** [Gen. 34:18–19]

This is an interesting bit of information. Apparently Dinah was quite attractive and her family was well-known for its financial prosperity. Because they were prosperous and because she was attractive, they were well-thought of in this very materialistic society. Materialism and superficiality were not inventions of 20<sup>th</sup> century Americans here we find it in one of the earliest cultures that the Bible makes us privy to.

**So came Hamor and Shechem, his son, to the gate of the city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, "These men—they are friendly with us. Let them dwell in the land and trade in it, for the land, we see, is large enough [lit., wide of hands] for them. Let us take their daughters for ourselves in marriage and our daughters let us give them."** [Gen. 34:20–21]

*To speak* is in the plural—both Hamor and Shechem are speaking. Shechem cares about one person and one person only: himself. Hamor wants whatever his son wants. He is the overindulgent father. What anyone else gets out of this deal is unimportant to him. He needs to hold this carrot out in front of these men in order to get what he wants. He knows how to sell his concepts to others and that is what he is doing. He notes that the Jews are peaceful, that there is enough land, and that then men could marry their daughters.

**"Only on this condition will the men agree with us to dwell with us; to become one people—that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised."** [Gen. 34:22]

Notice how Shechem puts this: he assumes that those listening to them want this to occur, they say that there is only one way to achieve intermarriage with the Jews and that is circumcision. There are no alternatives given. The Jews already are circumcised, which is why they want them to be circumcised. These are men who have confused the ritual with the reality. This is not unlike telling these men that they just need to go to church. Going to church has nothing to do with it. Being circumcised in the flesh has nothing to do with it. Regeneration is in the heart. **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.**

Now before this crowd begins to think too much about circumcision, Shechem quickly adds;

**"Will not their cattle, their property and all their beasts be ours? Only, we must agree with them and then they will dwell with us."** [Gen. 34:23]

Everyone was well-aware of how much the family of Jacob had. God had blessed him greatly with possessions. He was the rich man who lived just outside of town and everyone knew about him. And it was almost a dynasty of prosperity. Shechem must tempt them with this wealth.

**All all who went out of the gate of the city listened and agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gates of the city.** [Gen. 34:24]

The way that this worked was that Hamor and Shechem stood at the gates of the city as people came and went and convinced them, sometimes singly and sometimes in unison of the expediency of circumcision so that these men might have a chance to become a part of the wealth of Jacob.

#### **Levi and Simeon Murder the Men of Shechem and Then Plunder the Town /Jacob's Response**

**And it was on the third day when they were sore that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each their swords and came upon the city unawares and killed all the males.** [Gen. 34:25]

God, in times of excessive degeneracy, has ordered the Jews to kill every man, woman and child of a particular group of people. That is not the case here. We have an overindulgent father, a manipulative and self-centered son, and people (I assume Hamor's other sons) who were agreeable to them. There is nothing to indicate that the population as a whole was at fault here. They were apparently convinced (and, perhaps, manipulated) by Hamor and Shechem, but there is no crime in that.

Some may have had some real interest in the God of Jacob and his family and though this would be the perfect opportunity to explore these interests. These men were not deserving of death. What Simeon and Levi did was wait until these men were recovering from their circumcisions and then attack. They went throughout the entire city and slaughtered the men. This was entirely wrong. Whereas our society under reacts to rape, those brothers overreacted to it.

**They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and they took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away. Then the sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city because their sister had been defiled.** [Gen. 34:26–27]

Notice this sudden greed in Jacob's sons. Nothing is worse than the disgusting mixture of self-righteousness and greed. People who operate under these two spheres are liable to do anything. Such a combination accounts for a myriad of criminal behavior in today's society. Many criminals do not look at themselves as criminals or as wrong, but as people exploited by the system or denied by the system under which they live. Their criminal

behavior they see as a normal response to what society has done to them insofar as personal deprivation goes. Their actions are seen as normal responses to the position that they find themselves in. Accepting their life with honor and integrity does not occur to them when deluded by greed and self-righteousness. Self-righteous people can be the most criminal of all. They do not exactly realize that what they are doing is criminal and evil. Deep down they know what it is they are doing is wrong, but on the surface and in their conscious mind, they are justifying themselves, and with the help of other self-righteous people around them, they delude themselves.

So it was with the sons of Jacob. Having gone through the city and murdered all these men, Simeon and Levi also happened to notice what they possessed. Since they have already rationalized killing all these men in the first place because of Dinah, they now rationalized that it would be okay to just go back into town and steal all of their wealth. What I think happened was, all or most of the brothers were in on this; although Simeon and Levi went into the camp of the sons of Hamor to do the killing (the other brothers were nearby to spring into action if necessary). Then Simeon and Levi led Dinah back home while the other brothers went into the camp to steal and to plunder the helpless souls who remained.

So you are wondering why doesn't God just kill all the sons of Jacob and let Jacob start over? Or, why doesn't he kill them all except for Joseph and allow Jacob's seed to be raised up through Joseph? What God does in relation to Israel is a pattern for us to learn from. We have noticed that God is sometimes way too lenient with Christians that we know have done wrong (especially those Christians that we despise). Sometimes God is way too patient with us, although most of us don't mind that (as long as God is being patient with us). Sometimes God allows some unbelievers to go too far, in our own expert estimation. God gave them great leeway and revealed tremendous patience. These young men were all within God's plan and God still had things for them to do. Perhaps *you yourself think little of the riches of His [God's] kindness and forbearance [tolerance] and patience, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance (Rom. 2:4). But now, apart from the Law and the Prophets, the righteousness of God has been manifested, having been witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all those who believe, [them] being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God displayed publically by means of His blood as a propitiation [or, covering] through faith, demonstrating His righteousness, because, in the forbearance [or clemency or tolerance] of God, He passed over the sins previously committed (Rom. 3:21–22b,24–25).* Now would be an outstanding time to review the **Doctrine of the Forbearance of God (NOT DONE YET!!!)**.

What is occurring here might better explain other Old Testament passages, which seem unduly harsh. *Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob, rather you have come wary of me, O Israel. You have not brought to Me the sheep of your burnt offerings nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices. Rather, you have burdened me with your sins ;you have wearied Me with your iniquities. I, even I, am the One Who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake and I will not remember your sins (Isa. 43:22–23, 24b–25). I knew that you would act very treacherously; and you have been called a transgressor from the womb (Isa. 49:8b). The picture that Ezekiel paints of Israel as her inception is quite shocking unless one examines history such as this. "Your origin of and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and you mother a Hittite. As for your birth, on the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing. You were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born. When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you [while you were] in your blood, "Live!" (Ezek. 16:3b–6a).*

**They took their flocks and their herds, their asses and whatever was in the city and in the field. They captured all their wealth, all their little ones and their wives and made their prey all that was in the house. [Gen. 34:28–29]**

So that there is no confusion here, the Jews are not taking these wives and children to themselves as their own. They are captured and kept or sold as slaves. There might be some intermarriage, but not much. I don't recall any passage which tells us that some of these people became wives for the sons of Jacob.



This is strictly greed here. They did that which was wrong to begin with by killing perhaps as many as a dozen or more men (we do not know how many male servants were killed) and then they went back and stole from them and took their grieving widows and their fatherless children. A lot of people are confused by the Old Testament and the actions therein. They begin reading on their own for some strange reason, and expect that God's people, the Jews, draw smiley faces on their stationary, they are constantly thinking nice thoughts about ice cream and candies, they make friends with all the desert peoples, and they send little happy notes to everyone. They are shocked and confused to find out that these first Jews overreacted, they were vicious, self-righteous, and they were greedy. One thing that a person with interest in the things of God rarely sees in the Word is that the Bible presents an objective, honest recording of what happened. God's people, good and bad, along with their successes and failures, are all recorded without bias. One is hard-pressed to find any literature from any period of time where this is done. The author of a piece presents himself with few flaws, apart from being a very unlikeable lad. These men were severely flawed. Reread Ezek. 16:3–6; God presents these people as very unlikeable; as extremely unattractive. This is an honest appraisal from God the Holy Spirit.

Then there are the very few people who recognize that this Bible does record the activities of the Jews impartially then are confused as to why did God bless them? God blessed the Jews based upon His own promises and based upon His own character. They were responsible to Him and they were disciplined by Him. We, as Christians, are treated and blessed the same way. We are blessed far beyond anything that we deserve. We generally do not have an unbiased opinion of ourselves and it is only through by looking through the mirror of the Word of God that we see ourselves and how self-righteous, greedy and truly unlovely that we really are. Despite this, God takes care of all of our basic needs and gives us blessings that we in no way deserve. It is only when we recognize that we are no better than these Jews and that God, in His grace, has called us out from this world, that we begin to have a clue as to what life is all about.

**Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perissites. I have men of [few in] number and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I will be destroyed—both I and my household." [Gen. 34:30]**

The promised land was dotted with small villages of perhaps one or two; or maybe even 100 families, all living far enough away that they might graze their cattle and they might see one another and trade regularly, but they were far enough apart that they could expand somewhat. This tells us of two other sets of people who lived in the land at this time who were nearby. They would certainly find out about the slaughter and plunder of Shechem and possibly destroy Jacob and his family to prevent Jacob's family from doing the same thing to them. Jacob is not holding to God's promises here about being blessed and being multiplied; nor does he approach this from the standpoint of what they did was morally wrong. He is comparatively mature and it is my thought that here he needed to bring himself down to the moral level of his sons and present to them the facts of self-preservation. What they did was worthy of death and that is a real option for their immediate future.

Throughout the time of the patriarchs, we find Abraham, Isaac and Jacob fearing the uncivilized actions of the various tribes in whose land they stayed. They often lied to protect their lives, afraid of what the savages might do. Here we have the family of Jacob acting as savagely as any nomadic tribe to act and such actions would certainly arouse the hostility and retribution of others.

Were they unduly influenced by the people of Canaan? I believe that is very likely; and this would explain why God will temporarily remove them from Canaan.

**But they said, "Should he make our sister as a harlot?" [Gen. 34:31]**

Their answer reveals total unadulterated self-righteousness. How could anyone be this blind to their own evil? Man is self-deluded when operating under greed and self-righteousness. What happened to their sister was horrible; however, their response was totally wrong in every way. In their later dealings with their own brother, we will see that these brothers show very little promise as decent human beings.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---

**Genesis 35** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 35

### Genesis 35:1–29

Vv. 1-8	<a href="#">Jacob and company travel to Bethel</a>
Vv. 9–15	<a href="#">Jacob Encounters God Again</a>
Vv. 16–20	<a href="#">Jacob's Travels Continue/the birth of Benjamin/the death of Rachel</a>
Vv. 21–22a	<a href="#">Jacob continues on his journey/Reuben's sin</a>
Vv. 22b–29	<a href="#">The list of the sons of Jacob and the death of Isaac</a>

Maps, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

Introduction	<a href="#">Authorship and Basic Chapter Summaries of Genesis 35–39</a>
v. 7	<a href="#">What Jacob Had Asked for From God/How Jacob Promised to Respond</a>
v. 9	<a href="#">Jacob's Life and His Encounters with God</a>

**Introduction:** Genesis 35 is somewhat of an unusual chapter. Vv. 1–8 pretty much continue the narrative of Gen. 34. The sons of Israel had made themselves odious in the land, so they had to move from Shechem to Bethel, as guided by God. In v. 8, Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, dies—interestingly enough, we have never heard her name before, so she needs to be explained and read into the picture.

God seems to appear to Jacob once again in vv. 9–15 in Bethel. Jacob is associated with Bethel twice—once when he was leaving Canaan and 20+ years later after he had returned from Paddan-aram. This appears to be a second encounter in Bethel with God; and God names him *Israel* a second time.

They left Bethel and Rachel, Jacob's wife, will go into a hard labor. She will give birth to Benjamin, Jacob's final son; but she will die in the process (vv. 16–20).

Israel (Jacob) continues traveling south and Reuben, his eldest son, has sexual relations with Bilhah, his father's mistress. There is little editorial comment in the Bible about this incident.

This chapter ends with a list of Jacob's 12 sons, and finally with the death of his father Isaac.

When I first began studying this chapter, I believed that Joseph authored some of all of it. However, this final appearance by God to Israel is something that Jacob himself would have more likely recorded. And if he recorded that, then the material which occurs prior to this, would likely be Jacob's writing as well.

There are those who ascribe the authorship of the Law to several authors, most of whom lived several centuries after Moses, did so primarily because they were predisposed to removed prophecy from that portion of the Bible. They did not like that there would be prophecies centuries prior to those prophecies coming true. Therefore, they concluded that this was all written sometime later by a few religious fanatics and strung together after that, perhaps during the dispersion. On the other hand, there are the more conservative group who believes that Moses wrote every word of the Law. Nowhere does the New Testament ascribe Mosaic authorship to Genesis (it does to the other four books—see the **Study of Inspiration**).

It may help to have an overview of this chapter and those to come, which will help to explain who authored them.

### Authorship and Basic Chapter Summaries of Genesis 35–39

Chapter	Summary	Author
Genesis 35	Gen. 35 picks up where Gen. 34 left off. There is no compelling reason to see its contents as anything other than chronological (apart from the listing of his sons).	Jacob
Genesis 36	Gen. 36 lists the sons of Esau and the sons of Seir. This is a genealogical chapter which is a self-contained unit. We have studied Jacob up until this point; this answers the question, <i>what's up with Esau?</i>	Esau or Jacob as informed by Esau; or someone with access to genealogical records
Genesis 37	Gen. 37 begins with Joseph at a young age, as a thorn in the side to his brothers, and as a dreamer of dreams. His brothers sell him into slavery, and suggest to their father that Joseph was killed by a wild animal.	Joseph
Genesis 38	This is one of the oddest narratives in Scripture. It is here for a purpose, but that purpose is not known for hundreds of years. This is all about Judah and how he leaves his brothers and takes up with a Canaanite woman, has children, finds a wife (Tamar) for his first son, and then that son dies. The woman is given to his second son and that son dies. Although Judah promises his third son to her, he does not deliver on this promise. Sometime later, Judah's wife dies, and he has relations with Tamar, not realizing who she is. When she is pregnant, he calls for her execution, when it is revealed that he is the father.	Judah; or Joseph as informed by Judah.
<p>There are two points that need to be made about Gen. 38. The first is the time frame—this chapter has to take place in the very short space of 20–22 years (unless there is some overlap with subsequent chapters). Secondly, this chapter seems like it is thrown into Genesis without reason (like Gen. 36), but this is the line of the Messiah, which is obviously quite significant. No one at this time has any idea that this will be the line of David and David's Greater Son.</p>		
Genesis 39	With Gen. 39, and throughout the rest of the book of Genesis, we pick up with Joseph in Egypt, and his life as a slave. Gen. 39 ends with Joseph in prison.	Joseph (and so the rest of Genesis, chapters 39–50)

We do not know if these chapters existed as separate traditions which were later woven into the book of Genesis (presumably by editor Moses); or if these were *written* and memorized and passed along as an entire literary unit (or some mixture of these two).

We should bear in mind that, prior to Moses taking a position of leadership over the people of Israel, the children of Israel in Egypt were aware of their God (Ex. 1:17–21 2:23–25<sup>93</sup> 3:7–18); as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jacob's sons (Ex. 1:1–8 2:1 3:6). This suggests that they knew at least portions of their heritage, if not the Scriptures themselves (which would have consisted of the books of Genesis and Job).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

<sup>93</sup> These can be tricky passages because, strictly speaking, they do not involve Hebrews expressing faith in their God.

We also have a changing of the guard, if you will, at the end of chapter 35 (Jacob's sons are mentioned in full; and Isaac's death is recorded). We know that this will be an eventful chapter because Scofield's notes go from being  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a page to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a page.

The chapter breaks are man-made and not inspired by God (ditto for the divisions of the verses). Chapter 34 should not have stopped here, necessarily. Jacob and his family are leaving Shechem because of the incident of the previous chapter and traveling south to Bethel. Shechem is Northwest of the Dead Sea and Bethel is 30 miles south of there, still slightly Northwest of the Dead Sea. This is not far enough away from Shechem; however, they will stop there for a short time.

### Jacob and Company Travel to Bethel

**God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and live there and make there an altar to the God Who appeared to you when you fled from Esau, your brother." [Gen. 35:1]**

The three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did a lot of traveling. They always lived in tents which is analogous to our living in the world in our temporary habitations, or bodies. Our home is in heaven and we dwell in tabernacles (tents; temporary dwellings) as the patriarchs did. Jacob has lived in Bethel and has traveled north to flee from Esau and now he is returning to this area again. Jacob recognizes that there is one God and one God only; so he requires that all of the idols be gotten rid of. He has picked up people from all different kinds of cultures and under his roof (actually, within his compound), he has the right to require that idolatry be removed from his home.

**So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments." [Gen. 35:2]**

Because of where *purify yourselves* is, it is difficult to ascertain whether they were ordered to wash up or whether there were some religious purification rituals that they entered into. Putting away the foreign gods seems to indicate the latter, but putting on new garments seems to indicate the former. In any case, they were about to spend a long time on the road and Jacob was getting them prepared for it. During this journey, they would feel more and more at God's mercy and Jacob is trying to see that no one will cause them to stumble on this lengthy trip.

**"Then let us arise and go up to Bethel that I may make there an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress, and [Who] has been with me wherever [lit., in the way which] I have gone." [Gen. 35:3]**

Jacob here is witnessing to those in his periphery; in his family. This is something which he had not done before. We have seen that a couple of years ago, Jacob's spiritual life was pretty weak. He had no real testimony. He recognizes how God has been with him constantly, during his difficult times, and that God had consistently delivered him. Very few of us realize how closely God operates in our lives; how active His guidance is and close that He is. We chose to push Him away, as Jacob had for most of these years.

Regarding God's will in our lives, we see the interplay of God's plan and the volition of man in the upcoming chapters of Scripture. In Gen. 38, no one seems to have any idea what they ought to be doing, but God's plan still moves forward, as this chapter is all about the Line of Promise. In Gen. 37, 39–50, Joseph is clearly aware of God's will and he is clearly a mature believer. And so, God's plan moves forward in his life as well (and in the lives of his family). But whether attuned to God's thinking (as Joseph is) or not (Judah), God's plan still moves ahead; it is never slowed or stopped because of human volition.

**So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had and the rings that were in their ears and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem. [Gen. 35:4]**

This does not mean that the rings which they wore in their ears were wrong as ornaments. These apparently had some sort of pagan significance (such as little gods hanging from them or engraved onto them), and therefore were as idolatrous as the idols which some of the people possessed. This connection with idolatry is further verified by Hosea 2:13. Ex. 32:2 indicates that earrings were worn by women and children. These earrings had strange creatures engraved in them for the expressed purpose of warding off evil and as good luck charms.

Jacob was about to renew his covenant with God; he was beginning to realize that God had an extremely important function for him to play in history and that it was about time that he took it seriously. The reason that Jacob hid them was so they could not secretly go back and retrieve these idols and take them with them. This sentence here indicates to us that Jacob is still the author of this portion of God's Word.

**As they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were round about them so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.** [Gen. 35:5]

All the neighboring villages had heard what Jacob's sons did to the inhabitants of Shechem and they were likely very indignant and understood that their actions were evil and vicious. In many of these villages, the number of men far outnumbered the number of men which were with Jacob. Under normal circumstances, some of these villages would have come out and killed all of Jacob's family in retribution or to do it to them before Jacob's family did it to them. However, God caused these men to be afraid of Jacob's family so that they had safe passageway out of that area.

**And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel) which is in the land of Canaan; he and all the people who were with him and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel [lit., the God of Bethel] because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from [lit., from the face of] his brother.** [Gen. 35:6–7]

Jacob, unlike Abraham, his grandfather, was not known for offering sacrifices or building altars. God has come to him on several occasions but he has not very often gone to God. In Gen. 31:54, after Laban caught up with him Jacob made a sacrifice to God. When he first settled in Shechem, he made a sacrifice to God. His making these sacrifices and building these two altars indicates that he was finally becoming oriented to life in his old age. He finally was recognizing that God was operating in his life.

### **What Jacob Had Asked for From God/How Jacob Promised to Respond**

The last time that Jacob had been there, he had a dream, referred to as Jacob's ladder (or escalator). He named that area Bethel and, during his spiritual immaturity, he made a vow to God. He expected God to:

- Be with him
- To guard him on this journey away from home
- To provide food for him to eat
- To provide clothes for him to wear
- To cause him to return safely to his father's house (he has not seen Isaac since he left 20 years previous)

In return, Jacob was to:

- Make Y<sup>e</sup>howah his God (doesn't this remind you of *making* Jesus Lord God in our lives?)
- Jacob would give God a tenth of all that God had given him

So there is no misunderstanding, this was a vow made by a spiritually weak believer and such vows often mean very little (although God will hold a person to his vows). During those times, Jacob manipulated and deceived others, and to a certain extent, that is what he was doing to God. Thieme's language, as I recall, is that some people try *to strap it on* God. They think that they can make a trade out. God usually has to go first when it comes to self-preservation. However, people make vows and trade-offs with God also when they want some material item or some person. Then they often will begin giving God some great thing so that God must repay them by

giving them what it is that they want. It is not unlike being good for the month prior to Christmas (or, as it was in my case, a few days before Christmas).

The change of the name of Bethel is significant. Bethel meant *House of God* because Jacob, in his spiritual youth, was quite impressed by meeting God there. His concept of Who and What God was, was very limited. However, when he returns, he has already faced Esau with confidence in God. He escaped Esau years ago in fear and also ran from Laban in fear. Finally, after being wrestled and having his butt kicked by Jesus Christ, Jacob met Esau with confidence in his own preservation and in the preservation of his family. He now knows the God Who he met at Bethel, so he renames this place *The God of the House of God*, because he now knows this God. You may wonder, *didn't Jacob already name Luz Bethel?* And he did, back in Gen. 28:19. However, you cannot simply name a city on your own, and necessarily have that name stick. Charley Brown cannot simply call the city of Houston *Brownsville* and have it stick. So, Jacob named it back in Gen. 28:19; God later appeared to him and said, "I am the God of Bethel" which is *El-Bethel* in the Hebrew (Gen. 31:13). And so, Jacob returns to Luz and names it again *El-bethel*.

However, here Jacob builds an altar (and therefore offers sacrifices upon the altar) and he names this particular place El-bethel not to fulfill his vows to God, but because he recognizes that God was gracious enough to reveal Himself to Jacob when Jacob did not deserve this in any way, shape or form.

All of a sudden, in the next verse, we have an unusual statement. We have been traveling with Jacob and his wives, which include Rachel. Rachel has her nurse, Bilhah. Out of nowhere, we hear about Rebekah, Jacob's mother. Here is where we should have had our chapter break. This should be Gen. 35:1 or the final verse of Gen. 34.

These verses are strung together with the waw consecutive, which I have taken great liberties in translating it. In fact, I have represented the waw consecutive in a myriad of ways in past chapters and verses, doing a fair amount of interpretive translation. Context helps to determine how the waw consecutive is to be translated and I vary the translation somewhat just for variety (linguistically, that is valid). The other option is to continually translate the waw consecutive as *and* continually, in verse after verse. ***And Jacob went to Bethel and God revealed Himself to Jacob and Jacob went somewhere else and then this happened and then that happened.*** This can be quite tedious and monotonous. The NASB and the KJV will continually move from *and* to *so* to *now*. All versions, including the very literal *Emphasized Bible* does this. Often, a series of waw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs suggest a series of successive events (particularly in narratives).

The connective here is the simple waw conjunction, which is nearly always found with a perfect verb. Nearly always, *to die* is in the perfect tense.

**And Deborah died, Rebekah's nurse, and she was buried below Bethel under an oak, so the name of it was called Allon-bacuth.** [Gen. 35:8]

Allon-bacuth means *the oak of weeping*.

Jacob has already listed his eleven children and now all twelve of them are listed here.

### Jacob Encounters God Again

**God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddam-aram and blessed him.** [Gen. 35:9]

To follow what is occurring, we need to follow Jacob's life and the times that he encountered God:

### Jacob's Life and His Encounters with God

1. Jacob steals Isaac's blessing from Esau and flees the land of the Philistines (Beersheba—Gen. 28:10) and

## Jacob's Life and His Encounters with God

- leaves for Padam-aram (Gen. 26:18, 27:1–28:2)
2. Isaac, in one of his more lucid moments, gives him a blessing before he goes. This blessing is from God. Isaac said, "And may El Shaddai [God Almighty] bless you and make you prosperous and cause you to be prolific that you may become a company of peoples. May He also give to you the blessings of Abraham—to you and to your descendants with you—that you may possess the land of your travels which God gave to Abraham." (Gen. 28:3–5).
  3. On his way toward Haran, Jacob has a dream wherein God makes several promises to him: (a) "I will give it [this land] to you and to your descendants." (Gen. 28:13) (b) "Your descendants will be as the dust of the earth, spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:14) (c) "I am with you and will keep you wherever you go; and I will bring you back to this land for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Gen. 28:15).
  4. Jacob names this place Bethel (*House of God*).
  5. Jacob arrives in Haran, which is in Padan-aram and takes two wives and lives with Laban (Gen. 29–30)
  6. God, twenty years after Gen. 28:13–15, appears to Jacob and tells him to return to the land of Canaan (Gen. 31:3).
  7. Jacob leaves Laban surreptitiously, Laban pursues Jacob and catches up to him in a place that Jacob then named Galeed (later, Mizpah) (Gen. 31).
  8. Angels of God met Jacob afterward. Jacob names that place Mahanaim (Gen. 32:1–2).
  9. Jacob, in fear and confusion, attempts a number of different human viewpoint plans in anticipation of meeting Esau (this is soon after seeing his guardian angels) (Gen 32:1–23).
  10. This is where Jesus Christ comes to him, after giving him those promises, after showing him his guardian angels, and kicks his butt in a wrestling match (Gen. 32:24–32). This is because Jacob continues to oppose God.
  11. It is during this wrestling match that God changes his name to Israel and blesses him (Gen. 32:28). No matter what, God's plan moves forward.
  12. Jacob settles in outside of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, after resolving his differences amicably with Esau (Gen. 33).
  13. Jacob's family has a run-in with Shechem, the son of Hamor and overreact to his rape of Dinah (Gen. 34); they kill many innocent men.
  14. God tells Jacob to move to Bethel (i.e., Luz). Here, Jacob encounters God once again.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**And said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name." Therefore his name was called Israel. [Gen. 35:10]**

This is very similar to what occurred in Gen. 32.

**Also God had said to him, "I am El Shaddai (God Almighty). Be prosperous and prolific. A nation and a company of nations will come from you and kings will go forth from your loins. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you and to your descendants after you I will give this land." [Gen. 35:11–12]**

This tells us that God speaks through other people to us. This was a blessing from Isaac to Jacob and here it is quoted as a blessing from God to Jacob. Isaac was not God; Isaac was a very flawed human being as we have seen. God, however, spoke through Isaac to Jacob and blessed him through Isaac.

**And God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him and Jacob set up a pillar [lit., *pillared a pillar*] in that place where He had spoken with him—a pillar of stones; and he poured**



**a drink offering out on it and he poured oil on it. Therefore, Jacob called the name of that place where there God had spoken with him Bethel.** [Gen. 35:13–15]

This is the first recording of a drink offering in the Bible.

It is not necessarily likely that Jacob understood the communication ministry of God the Holy Spirit at this time (or, ever, in his lifetime). Therefore, from Jacob's point of view, the oil was not necessarily a reference to God the Holy Spirit. However, God had just communicated with Jacob in both of these instances, so, from the God-ward point of view, the oil—apparently chosen from Jacob's free will—represents the Holy Spirit, Who reveals spiritual information to us.

### **Jacob's Travels Continue/the Birth of Benjamin/the Death of Rachel**

**Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still a little distance to come toward Ephrath, Rachel travailed and she had hard labor.** [Gen. 35:16]

Here the vocabulary, the geography and the author's personal experience are all intertwined. They are traveling south from Bethel, west of the mountains and this comes from the viewpoint and memory of a very young man, Joseph. *The Emphasized Bible* puts it this way: ...when there was yet a stretch of country to enter into Ephrath. Kib<sup>r</sup>âh (קִבְרָא) [pronounced *kih-RAW*] probably means *little* and it is used in conjunction with a measurement, usually with a distance. Although its exact meaning is unclear, it seems to indicate a short distance (not because I want to interpret that way; this is from BDB pg. 460). Because of the NASV rendering of *some distance*, some commentators believe that there is a second Ephrath (Bethlehem) found here. Whereas there is no problem that two different places have the same name, that just doesn't appear to be the case here.

There is the familiar word here 'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*], which is translated *land, earth*, and, in this case *distance, country, ground*. This is the famous word used in conjunction with *the promised land* and with Gen. 1:1 when God created the heavens and the *earth*. We know because of 1Sam. 10:2 that we are in the country or the area of Benjamin, which is on the West side of the mountains. Just over the mountains, east from where they are, is Ephrath (or, Bethlehem).

**And when she was in her hardness of labor, the midwife said to her, "Fear not, for now this is a son for you" as her soul was departing for she died. She called his name Ben-oni but his father called him Benjamin.** [Gen. 35:17–18]

In this verse we come upon another clue to authorship and to a most marvelous word: the first word in the Hebrew dictionary is 'âb (אָב) [pronounced *aw<sup>b</sup>v*] and it means *father*. Throughout the portion of Scripture that Jacob wrote, we find the word *father* (over)used in Gen. 34 for Hamor, the father of Shechem; and in Gen. 31 for Isaac. Not once in the several chapters that Jacob wrote do we find the word *father* applied to himself. However, here Jacob is called *father*. The word was obviously in his vocabulary, but he never used it of himself. The Hebrew word can mean *father, grandfather* or *ancestor*. So Jacob would not have seen himself in that light. He was the son of Isaac. However, this new author looked upon Jacob as *father*. This is one place in this narrative which suggests that Joseph could have been the author. Jacob does not refer to himself as *father*, but Joseph, who would have been quite young when his mother died and his younger brother was born, would have seen Jacob as his father and the naming of the child would have made an impression upon Joseph.

It is possible that Jacob began this chapter and Joseph completed it. The problem with this theory is, there is no simple transition verse (prior to this verse) which would suggest a change of authors. A new author could have begun the text in the middle of v. 22, but there is really no place prior to this in Gen. 35 where this would make sense.

Regarding the transmission of text, we have no idea how this occurred. Writing did exist in some areas during this time; but did it exist in Canaan? That we do not know. Remember when Abraham bought the grave site, the

business transaction was carried out before many witnesses, suggesting that there was no deed recorded, but that these men and their memories of the agreement made was the *recorded deed*.

Could this portion of Scripture been originally *written* by Jacob, recounted to his favorite son Joseph, who carried it with him in his soul? Joseph could have made some slight changes here and there, occasionally adding his own sensibilities to the text (like referring to *Jacob* as *his father*).

And, whereas in the previous chapters we have many mentions of Bildah, Leah and Zilpah, Jacob's other wives, they are not mentioned again other than in an incestuous event between Reuben and Bildah, and their names come up in a list of the sons of Jacob. Their deaths are not recorded nor does this author mention one more item of interest about these three women. Jacob had a lot to say about all of them and each is mentioned over a half-dozen times by Jacob. However, this author mentions only one wife of Jacob, and that is Rachel; along with Rachel's last son, Benjamin.

Again, we do not know how the text was transmitted (I believe by word of mouth from father to son; and I believe that it was memorized); and we do not know if one author (Joseph) may have modified the narratives of another author (Jacob).

Let's discuss the child born here. Benjamin is in many ways a type of Christ. He was born in Bethlehem-Ephrath, as was our Lord, and his life is associated with the death of another. Rachel died that Benjamin might live. Benjamin was given two names. His mother, at her death, named him Ben-oni, which means *son of my sorrow*, which gives us one aspect of our Lord. He suffered the penalty for our sins. **He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him** (Isa. 53:3). Jacob named him Benjamin, which means *son of my right hand*. **The Lord said to my Lord [God the Father said to God the Son], "Sit at My right hand, until I place Your enemies beneath Your feet."** (Matt. 22:44 Psalm 110:1).

Ben-oni means *son of my sorrow*, referring to Rachel's difficult labor. In dying grace, some of us know that this is the end of our lives, which is very possible in Rachel's case. Benjamin means *son of my right hand*, which, as C.I. Scofield points out, is a shadow of the function of the two advents of Jesus Christ. The son of my sorrow is the humanity of Jesus Christ, bearing our sins, paying the penalty for our iniquity (Isa. 53:3 reads: **He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we esteemed Him not**). This interpretation is based upon a Hebrew homonym<sup>94</sup> that most translators agree upon. The Son of my right hand refers to His return at the end of the tribulation; the second advent, the judge the world and to cull out the unbelievers from the face of the earth, executing judgement as God's right hand (Mark 14:62 reads: **Jesus said, "...You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven."** See also Psalm 110:1 Dan. 7:13 Mark 16:19).

**So Rachel died and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).** [Gen. 35:19]

They were on their way to Bethlehem along the Western portion of the mountains. We know this because Rachel's grave is still found in the area of the tribe of Dan as recently as 1Samuel. There is a popular grave site for Rachel located near Bethlehem; however, that is not what this passage says. Jacob and his family are on this road which goes to Bethlehem (which is possibly their destination) and Rachel dies at the beginning of this journey. Her exact place of burial is unknown today (this will become an issue to us in 1Sam. 9–10). But what is important that we need to note from this passage is that the road Jacob was on continued on to Bethlehem; this does not mean that they were right outside of Bethlehem when Rachel died and was buried. Jacob will later say that he buried Rachel some distance from Bethlehem (or, Ephrath, as it was called then—Gen. 48:7).

This is the first mention of Bethlehem in the Bible—the city where our Lord was born. Bethlehem means *house of bread*. As Scofield points out, other than the birth of our Lord there, Bethlehem is never mentioned with respect

---

<sup>94</sup> Although we generally view homonyms as words which sound alike; however, in the Hebrew it is used of two words with the same spelling but different meanings

to any aspect of our Lord's ministry nor is it mentioned in conjunction with the church. Because it is but five miles from Jerusalem, it was essentially a suburb of Jerusalem.

**And Jacob set up a pillar [lit., pillared a pillar] upon her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel's tomb which is there to this day. [Gen. 35:20]**

The second phrase of this verse is a gloss or suggests that this was written many years later. I would go with the gloss. Obviously, Jacob would not set up the pillar, mourn for a few days, and then head out, commenting, *and the pillar for Rachel's tomb is there to this day*. This is only remarkable if this is observed a generation or more later. Although Joseph could have added these words, it would have made little sense for him to do so. He is perhaps 10 or 12 at this time, and he will leave the Land of Promise for good at age 17. It is certainly possible that one of his brothers told him that the pillar still stands. However, this may have been added by Joshua, who scouted out the land as a spy and later conquered the land. Since these glosses occur throughout Genesis, they do not necessarily point to an author at a much later date, but to someone who may have added these words and would have had the authority to add them (like Moses or Joshua).

### Jacob Continues on His Journey/Reuben's Sin

**Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the Migdal Eder [lit., the tower of the flock]. While Israel dwelt in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. [Gen. 35:21–22a]**

Eder is the site of a watchtower between the cities of Bethlehem and Hebron. This was Jacob and company temporary residence. They were heading toward Bethlehem, but the death of Rachel just stopped Jacob to where he did not feel like going any further for awhile.

Again, Jacob, or Israel, is called *father*, and we have the unfortunate incident of incest and adultery. Reuben did not have any self-control and he did what he wanted when he wanted. Jacob will alter call him as unstable as water. At this point in time I am uncertain as to what this verse is telling us, other than it gives us insight into the (lack of) character of Reuben. We have the question as to who told who? After all, this would have been a private affair unless Reuben bragged about what he did—this would not have been out of character for Reuben. Who would be likely to have told Jacob about what Reuben did? Let me suggest a young Joseph did.

I stopped midverse, as the people who set up our verse system should have. What follows is a list of the sons of Israel; the twelve tribes if you will.

### The List of the Sons of Jacob and the Death of Isaac

**Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: The Sons of Leah: Jacob's first-born, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. [Gen. 22b–26]**

The sons of Jacob, the twelve tribes of Israel, are mentioned as a group several times in Scripture. They are named together in Gen. 49 where Jacob describes the characteristics of each member of his family. They are listed together several times in the book of Numbers and Moses blesses them in Deut. 33 (this will be covered when we do Jacob's death bed evaluation and predictions concerning his sons). We again find them listed in the genealogy tables of 1Chron. 2:1–2, listed in the same order as we find them here except that Dan precedes Joseph and Benjamin. Joshua 15 and following (and elsewhere) lists the twelve sons and the division of land. Finally, the twelve tribes are listed at the end of the Bible in Rev. 7:4–8; however, the tribe of Dan is conspicuously absent from this list and they are replaced with the half-tribe of Manasseh (to be born to Joseph when he is in Egypt). If memory serves, either the Beast or the False Prophet come from the tribe of Dan.

As we have just seen, not all of Jacob's sons were born in Paddan-aram, but Benjamin was born after they left that area. This is called synecdoche [pronounced *syn-EK-do-kee*] of the whole where the whole is put in for the part (the greater part, usually) and we find this in Heb. 11:13 where it reads **these all died in faith**. However, Enoch, who is mentioned in context, did not die; he was translated. So there is no contradiction here, just a common figure of speech. As an example, I might say *all translators agree on some point*, whereas I mean to say *virtually all conservative translators agree on this point*.

**And Jacob came to Isaac, his father, at Mamre (or Kiriath-arba—that is, Hebron) where Abraham and Isaac had stayed.** [Gen. 35:27]

Hebron is almost due south from where Jacob was and not appreciably far from Bethel or from Bethlehem. Nothing is said as to how long it took Jacob to go back to visit his father or to bring his children to him. The indication is that they did not live all that far apart, but that Jacob settled down a couple times before he actually came to his father.

**Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. and Isaac breathed his last and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of [or, satisfied with] days. And Esau and Jacob, his sons, buried him.** [Gen. 35:28–29]

It is this verse which makes Gen. 27:2 seem rather humorous. Recall that Isaac called his son to his side because he thought that he was dying. He said, "I do not know the day of my death." Idiomatically, this meant that he thought death was imminent and he did not want to die without properly blessing Esau, his favorite son. However, literally, it means that he did not have a clue as to the day of his death, which occurred forty some years after Gen. 27:2. Scofield, usually astute in Biblical trivia, wrote this occurred 43 years ago, given 20 years spent in Haran and 25 years transpired after Jacob returned from Haran.

Life has changed very little in 4000 years. At a funeral, the family returns to the patriarch and those family members who have not seen each other for a long time gather. Esau is named first and the author must have spent some time with Esau (or, the author of the next chapter), as we have a complete genealogy of Esau follows.

Now, even though the line of Esau will be the topic of the following chapter, the line extends beyond this period of time. Therefore, even if Gen. 36 was first recorded soon after the funeral, someone would have to have added many of the names at a later date.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

**Genesis 36** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 36

### Genesis 36:1–43

The Chapter Outline:

Vv. 1–5	Esau's wives and basic family structure
Vv. 6–8	Esau moves [back] to Seir
Vv. 9–14	The descendants of Esau
Vv. 15–19	The chiefs of the descendants of Esau
Vv. 20–28	The descendants of Seir
Vv. 29–30	The chiefs of the descendants of Seir
Vv. 31–39	The kings of Edom
Vv. 40–43	The chiefs of Esau

Maps, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

v. 1	<a href="#">Map of Edom</a>
v. 7	<a href="#">Where exactly did Esau live?</a>
v. 12	<a href="#">The Amalekites</a>

**Introduction:** Chapter 36 is a genealogical chapter, which can be a verse by verse, name by name slug-fest. Herein is Esau's line followed. When you decided the read through the Bible in a year, you read through this chapter in about 1 minute, noting where the genealogy began, skimming through to the end, and then picking up the narrative in Gen. 37. We will spend a little longer here and perhaps even derive a little spiritual benefit and a worthwhile historical background from Gen. 36.

This chapter is known as a parecbasis [pronounced *par-EK-ba-sis*]; that is, it is a digression, a temporary turning aside from one subject to another. We have been following the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and we will resume that line after this chapter. We will step aside to this chapter to examine Esau's line.

Some think that this chapter was arbitrarily inserted into Genesis sometime after the time of Saul, citing v. 31 as proof of that view. We will discuss this when we come to v. 31.

Esau and Jacob are the same age (being twins) and the generations named would have been those who would have been alive during the funeral of Isaac, their father. It is my opinion that Esau, in his old age, kept a genealogical chart which he shared with Joseph, or that Joseph pressed him for knowledge of his family. In the time that passed during the funeral of Isaac, which occurred when Joseph was young (his early teens) whom Joseph did not know at all, that Esau took a fondness for his youngest nephew whom he had never seen before and spent some time with this nephew. Joseph was somewhat of an outcast from his own family. However, any relationship between Esau and his nephew Joseph is purely speculative.

We do have an apparent contradiction which must be sorted out. When Esau and Jacob reunite in Ge. 32, they spend a short time together, but Esau returns *that day* to Seir (Gen. 32:16). In Gen. 36:6–8, Esau and Jacob separated because they had too much in the way of livestock. What apparently happened was, at the death of

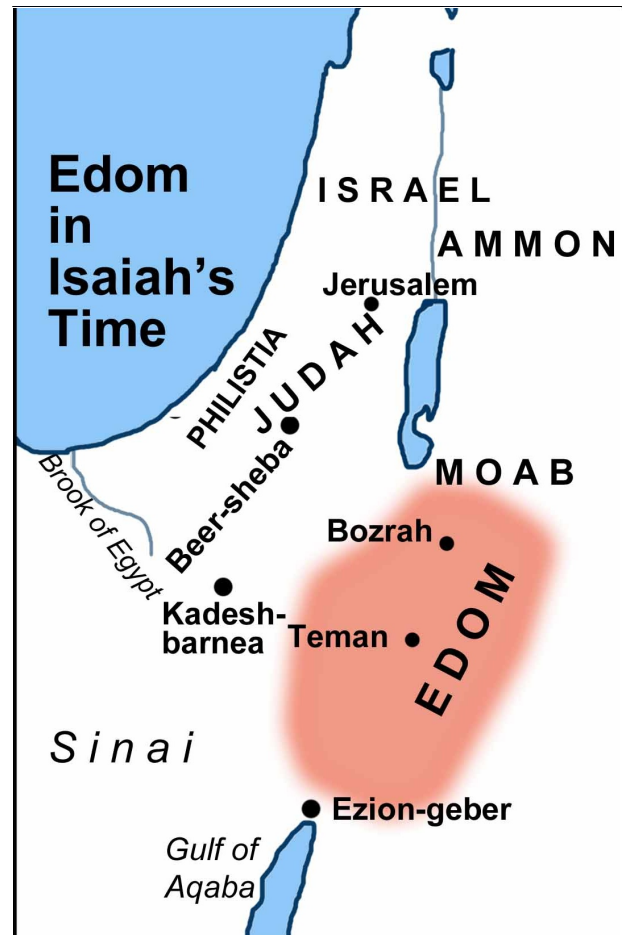
Isaac, when Isaac's wealth was to be divided up, Esau returned from the land of Seir with all of his family and possessions. Jacob also moved to that area. However, after living in that area for awhile together, Esau voluntarily moved back to where he had been living. Anytime we have the same city or area named in the Bible, we are not necessarily speaking of the exact same time-frame as all other references to that city or area. People are born in one state, move to another and reside there for a great many years, return to their home state, and then, after a short time, move back to where they came from. This is not unusual behavior, nor should it be misconstrued as some sort of contradiction. The time frame for Esau moving into the same area as Jacob is purely conjecture; but it does fit with the facts that we do know.

### Esau's Wives and Basic Family Structure

**These [are] the descendants of Esau (that is, Edom): Esau took his [first two] wives from the Canaanites: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. [Gen. 36:1–3]**

**Map of Edom;** from [JesusWalk.com](http://JesusWalk.com); accessed October 24, 2016. Edom has a very prominent place in Scripture. It is located south-southeast of Israel, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, bordered on the north by Moab.

This area was eventually populated by descendants of Esau, a man so close to the promise of God. The King's Highway passes through the eastern plateau of Edom (Num. 20:14–18) and in the time of the Exodus, the Edomites refused to allow the Jews to cross through their land on this highway (Num. 20:14–21 21:4 Judges 11:17–18). As we will see when we enter into the prophetic books, Edom has a special place in prophecy, being a powerful, Gentile nation on the day of the Lord. We will find prophecies concerning Edom in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Obadiah. Who would have thought that nation, now in the midst of a desert, would become powerful again? However, with the discoveries of oil in the Mideast, many nations built on sand have become powerful, political entities.



The Septuagint, the Samaritan and the Syrian text read: **Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite** rather than the *daughter of Zibeon*, as is found in the Masoretic text and so translated in the KJV, the ASV and others. We have already covered the wives of Esau, who had similar names and nicknames, which is a coincidence, but not a cause for concern. Because of the difference of the Massoretic text and the LXX, we do not know whether Anah was the father or mother of Oholibamah; furthermore, it is possible that Hivite should be Horite instead. In Hebrew, a *v* (vav or waw) is ו and an *r* (res) is ר. Obviously an easy mistake to make. Making a purely superficial call, this Anah and Zibeon are probably both the same ones found in Gen. 36:20 & 29. Other than they were both men of distinction (which would make sense as Esau was also a man of distinction, being one of the riches nomadic men of the area), we know nothing about these men.

Nabaioth is the oldest son of Ishmael and the grandson of Abraham (and Hagar). His descendants became an eastern Semitic tribe of desert nomads and we find this tribe mentioned in the records of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.). This group is also mentioned by Assurbanipal (668–633 B.C.) in the records of his campaigns in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. They are also found in 1Chron. 1:29 and Isa. 60:7, but are not to be identified with the Nabateans because of the extreme language differences.

**And Adah bore to Esau Eliphaz; Basemath bore Reuel; and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. [Gen. 36:4–5]**

These are the children who began Esau's family while he was still living with Isaac in the land of Canaan. It would make sense that these were born around the time that Jacob left Canaan to go east.

Eliphaz means *God is fine gold* or *God is victorious*. We don't know if this Eliphaz was the Eliphaz who was one of Job's three friends. In Job, Eliphaz from Teman, and here Teman is the name of his first-born. It is not a strain on our credulity that years after he was born, Eliphaz established himself in northern Edom, naming this area after his first son. The timing is reasonable, since there is no mention in Job of the Jew or of the Law of Moses or anything else related to Israel. Therefore, Job had to take place some time after the establishment of Teman, the city (we would call it more of a village) and probably before the Exodus. There is no conclusive proof, but it seems quite reasonable. Now, what about Esau *not* being the spiritual line? The line of the Messiah went through Jacob; but this does not mean that Esau was anti-God; nor does it mean that his children were anti-God. However, at some point, his line diverged from the Revealed God.

The sons might be named in order of birth, which is why Reuel is named next, although Basemath was Esau's third wife (and generally named third). There are several Reuel's in the Bible, the most famous one being the priest of Midian who gave his daughter to Moses to wed (he is also called Jethro). Obviously not the same person. This Reuel became a man of prominence, but not prominent enough for us to know anything about him other than his name means *friend/companion of God*. These names given by Esau to his children make me think that he is trying to appease God for the original lack of interest in his birthright. It is not farfetched for Esau to have been bothered by that incident for years to follow (the bulk of his life) and to always look upon himself as being cursed because of his youthful failure. We all have youthful failures; it is when these failures dominate out adult life (or, for that matter, when any failure dominates our adult life) that ruins our spiritual life.

The last three sons became men of prominence, but other than that, we know nothing about them.

### **Esau Moves [Back] to Seir**

**The Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters, and all the members of his household [lit., the souls of his house]; and his cattle and all his beasts and all his property which he had acquired in the land of Canaan and he went into a land away from Jacob his brother, for their possessions [were] too great for them to dwell together. The land of their habitation could not support them because of their cattle. [Gen. 36:5–7]**

Again, I am theorizing that Esau became very rich in the land of Canaan and struck out on his own sometime after Jacob made a run for it. Esau left a very prosperous man and returned to the land of Canaan at his father's death a very prosperous man (we know that he was successful because of his short meeting with Jacob in Gen. 33). Isaac had a great deal of wealth which had to be dealt with. How they split is up is not told to us, but both Jacob and Esau began wealthy; and, at Isaac's death, became much more wealthy. Since Isaac's cattle and possessions were all there in the land of Canaan, they both chose to remain there to administer the estate. However, the combined wealth of all three of them made it too difficult to pasture that much cattle. Esau didn't just head off in any direction; he merely moved back to an area that he came from; an area that he was familiar with.

Let's just cover this in points, as the Bible does not really tell us that, Esau lived here, then he moved there, and then he moved somewhere else.

### **Where exactly did Esau live?**

12. Esau first lived with his father and mother and Jacob. When Jacob headed east (for fear of being killed by Esau), Esau was living in Canaan with his parents (probably in the same compound; but indecently with

## Where exactly did Esau live?

- his wives).
13. When Jacob returns to Canaan, 20 years later, Esau is living in Seir. He urges his brother Jacob to join him there. Gen. 33:12–17
  14. At some point in time, Esau and Jacob are living near one another in Canaan, and Esau leaves because they have too much cattle together. Esau goes to Seir. Gen. 36:5–7
  15. Esau and Jacob had to live near one another at some point and have so much by way of cattle, that Esau felt he needed to separate from Jacob. Given the early history of Jacob and Esau and given the Jacob left Canaan with very little by way of possessions, this situation of them living near one another had to have happened later in their lives.
  16. What makes the most sense is, Isaac dies and the two brothers reunite at his funeral; and then Esau decides to stay in Canaan with his brother. Although some of this is conjecture, it would make perfect sense for Esau, at the death of his father, to want to hold on to family. Gen. 35:27–29
  17. Esau and Jacob would have been older, more mature, less jealous of one another, and even more prosperous than ever before (we tend to become more prosperous in life as we get older—provided that we are not slackers).
  18. It was not really God's plan for Esau and Jacob to remain together as one family. The line of the Messiah was to go through Jacob, so Esau is not required for that.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**So Esau dwelt in the hill country of Seir (Esau is Edom).** [Gen. 36:8]

Edom is quite a fair distance away (in ancient world terms). When Esau and Jacob first hooked up, Esau probably took the King's Highway due south to get to Edom. This other route may have been more circuitous. Edom is located south east of the Dead Sea, below Moab.

### The Descendants of Esau

**These are the descendants of Esau, the father of the Edomites [who dwelt in] the hill country of Seir. These are the names of the sons of Esau: Eliphaz, the son of Adah, the wife of Esau; Reuel, the son of Basemath, the wife of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.** [Gen. 36:9–11]

Either Eliphaz named his territory after his first-born or his first-born settled an area and named it after himself. In either case, the area of Teman is noted throughout the Old Testament. It was known as an area where there were wise men (Jer. 49:7 Obad. 8); and it was an area which came under indictment from God when Edom was castigated (Jer. 49:20 Ezek. 25:13 Amos 1:12 Obad. 9)<sup>95</sup>. Teman, in ordinary use in the Bible, means south, which could explain Habak. 3:3.

As was mentioned, Eliphaz of the book of Job was a Temanite and perhaps was the very same Eliphaz that we find here.

Although the name of Kenaz occurs several times throughout the Bible, they are all unrelated to this Kenaz. One of Omar's descendants who took his name formed a band in Houston and one of Zepho's descendants became one of the Marx brothers.<sup>96</sup> Zepho is called Zephi in 1Chron. 1:36

<sup>95</sup> Teman and Dedan are mentioned as representative of Edom because they were at opposite ends of the country from one another

<sup>96</sup> Yes, I think that I am being clever.



**Timna was a mistress of Eliphaz, Esau's son; she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These [are] the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. [Gen. 36:12]**

Live-in arrangements were not an invention of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We find concubines, or mistresses, or live-in lovers or lovers-on-the-side as early as Gen. 22:24. They represent often a lack of true commitment, an experiment which may last a lifetime, and, generally speaking, the children suffer as a result.

It is not clear whether the Amalekites famous in Scripture came from this man or from much earlier.

### The Amalekites

The Amalekites were one of the most vicious enemies of Israel. They occupied an area southwest of the land of Canaan. The name, Amalekite, was mentioned back in Gen. 14:7. This is a different Amalek or a reference to people of this land which Amalek later settled. Moses, as the editor, may have inserted that, the other reference becoming too obscure even for his generation. They were a nomadic group who more or less occupied the same territory as the Ishmaelites (cp Gen. 25:18 and 1Sam. 15:7). Judges 6:3, 33 indicates that they may have also, during that time period, lived further east. and Judges 12:15 indicates that they may have lived further north also. The Amalekites attacked the wandering Israelites when they were on their exodus in Ex. 17 and Deut. 25:17–18. They became one of the peoples that God marked for extinction in Deut. 25:19. Because of the lack of faith of some of the early Israelite leaders, they were unable to defeat the Amalekites in Num. 13 & 14. The Amalekites continued to be a thorn in the side of the Israelites throughout the time of the judges through to the rulership of Saul. King David apparently all but destroyed the Amalekites, who are not mentioned again after his rule until 1Chron. 18:11.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**These [are] the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, Mizzah; these [were] the descendants of Basemath, Esau's wife. [Gen. 36:13]**

Zerah means *shining, rising, dawning*, and he is found in Gen. 36:13, 17, 36 and 1Chron. 1:37, 44. He is not the founder of the Zerahites, however (see Gen. 46:10 Ex. 6:15 Num. 26:13 1Chron. 4:24). The other sons, while men of distinction in their day, are unknown to us today.

**These [are] the sons of Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon, Esau's wife: Jeush, Jalam and Korah. [Gen. 36:14]**

As in v. 2, the Septuagint, the Samaritan and the Syrian text read: *Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite* rather than the *daughter of Zibeon*, as is found in the Masoretic text and so translated in the KJV, the ASV<sup>97</sup> and others. Men of distinction in their day; unknown to us today.

### The Chiefs of the Descendants of Esau

**These [are] the chiefs of the sons of Esau, the sons of Eliphaz, the first-born of Esau: Chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek; these are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Adah. [Gen. 36:15–16]**

In the Hebrew, chief is 'allûph (אֱלִיּוּף) [pronounced *ahl-LOOF*] and it certainly seems to be the kind of word from which we would have gotten our English word *aloof*. I do not know that to be a fact, however. This word can mean *familiar, friend, gentle, tame, docile, a tame bullock*. The majority of Scripture translates this word as *duke* or

<sup>97</sup> The NASB translates this *Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the granddaughter of Anah*, but reads *son* in the margin

some sort of a prominent official (e.g., *chief, sheik*). However, it is translated friend and guide in the Psalms and Proverbs and as *oxen* in a couple of places. I think that the sense is someone with some stature and authority. All these men had some position of prominence and good standing in their community as the early founders, revered not unlike we do George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or Alexander Hamilton. They had less widespread political influence, but there was no one on earth to compare them to.

**These [are] the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah; these [are] the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom; they [are] the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. These [are] the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah; these are the chiefs born of Oholibamah (the daughter of Anah), Esau's wife. These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom) and these [are] their chiefs. [Gen. 36:17–19]**

These are all people that we have covered; however, Esau (or Joseph) mentioned Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, and decided to provide us with some historical background.

### The Descendants of Seir

**These [are] the sons [descendants] of Seir, the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These [are] the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. [Gen. 36:20–21]**

Seir refers to a mountain range in Edom, likely named after the Seir in this verse. Whether these are sons or grandsons (or even later descendants) of Seir, we don't know. Apparently, these are people are Horites, with whom Esau has a pact, who also occupy this land. See the **Doctrine of the Horites/Hivites**. The persons mentioned here are prominent men of their day and lost to us historically.

**Hori and Hemam [were] the sons of Lotan and Lotan's sister was Timna. [Gen. 36:22]**

Hemam is spelled Heman in the LXX; we find his name spelled Homam in 1Chron. 1:39. The difference in the vowels is easy to explain: it was not until after the time of our Lord that the vowel points were added. Prior to that, the vowels were carried by tradition (which is why we do not know the proper pronunciation of YHWH, since His name was not pronounced). Since there are so many books in the Bible, it is not inconceivable that some generations learned the correct pronunciation in one chapter and the incorrect one in a parallel passage (given that these are genealogies and they were skipped over in careful examination then just as we do today. The difference of the last consonant is just a variation in spelling, not unlike a nickname or a common name (eg, *Bob* for *Robert*).

Timna, as we have seen, was Eliphaz's live-in lover, from whence came the evil Amalekites.

**These [are] the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam. These [are] the sons of Zibeon: Aiah, Anah (who [is] the Anah who discovered the hot springs in the wilderness as he pastured the asses of Zibeon, his father). These [are] the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. These [are] the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Cheran. These [are] the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan. These [are] the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. [Gen. 36:23–28]**

Alvan is Alian in 1Chron. 1:40 (incidentally, the first mention of Alians in the Bible); and Shepho is written Shephi in Chronicles. We have a typo in the Hebrew; the Dishon in v. 26 is *Dishan* in the Hebrew, but *Dis(h)on* in the LXX. 1Chron. 1:41 has Dishon. The LXX of Gen. 36:28 and 1Chron. 1:42 is even more of a mess.<sup>98</sup> Hemdan here is Hamram in 1Chron. 1:41. Akan in v. 27 is Jaakan in 1Chron. 1:42.

<sup>98</sup> Gen. 36:28, in the Greek, is *and these [are] the sons of Rison: Hos and Aran*. The Greek of 1Chron. 1:42b is *the sons of Disan, Os and Aran*.

This verse gives us further evidence that Anah was a male: *discovered* is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, meaning that is the case, number and gender or its subject. Names do change over the years: Anah (Anna) and Cheran (Karen) are used as named for females today. As before, these people's place in history is confined to their mention in this portion of God's Word.

What is striking is the number of similarities that we find between this chapter of God's Word and the book of Job. Job lived in the land of Uz; Uz was likely on the boarder of Edom (according to the Syriac Book)<sup>99</sup>; there was a tribe of Temanites found in the book of Job (Job 2:11); had a friend named Eliphaz; and there were a colony of Edomites (called the daughters of Edom) in the land of Uz (Lam. 4:21). People are often named for their ancestors and many of these names here either came from people who were once associated with Job or had descendants who were associated with Job. At this point, I would theorize that, because God tends to be working in various areas of positive volition, that he stayed with the Jews until their time of slavery to the Egyptians, and then worked through Job during this time. I should rephrase that—Scripture appeared to have been written by various patriarch until the time of Joseph, and then nothing more was written until Moses, 200 years later. I would guess the Job was written in between these times. This would have allowed the Edomites time to have traveled a bit outside their traditional borders into the land of Uz. It would be marvelous to associate the Eliphaz of this portion of Scripture to the Eliphaz of the book of Job, but I am leaning more and more that it was a descendant or later relative of his.

### The Chiefs of the Descendants of Seir

**These [are] the chiefs of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These [are] the chiefs of the land of Seir, according to their families. [Gen. 36:29–30]**

### The Kings of Edom

**These [are] the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites: and Bela, the son of Beor, reigned in Edom; the name of his city: Dinabah. Bela died and Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his stead. Jobab died and Husham, of the land of the Temanites, reigned in his stead. Husham died and Hadad, the son of Bedad who defeated [lit., struck down]<sup>100</sup> the Midian(s) in the country of Moab, reigned in his stead. The name of his city was Avith. Hadad died and Samlah of Masrekah, reigned in his stead. And Samlah died and Shaul, of Rehoboth on the Euphrates [lit., the river], reigned in his stead. Shaul died and Baal-hanan, the son of Achbor, reigned in his stead. And Baal-hanan, the son of Achbor, died and Hadar reigned in his stead. The name of his city: Pau<sup>101</sup>; his wife's name: Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezhab. [Gen. 36:31–39]**

The kings of Edom were in existence prior to the kings of Israel. 1Cor. 15:46 reads: **However, the spiritual is not first but the natural; then the spiritual.** The natural or carnal line of Esau is given before the line of Israel; and the royal line of Esau occurs prior to the royal line of Israel. In fact, it is characteristic of Scripture to reveal that which is natural first. We find Adam first, then the second Adam; Cain is born first, then Abel; Cain's descendants are named first, then Seth's; Saul precedes David. Man and Satan are given the first chance at everything; then God reveals the spiritual solution.

<sup>99</sup> See the book of Job for more geographical information

<sup>100</sup> The KJV word is *smote*, which is a marvelous word because it connotes being hit, being struck down and being defeated, all with one word. However, I am trying to veer more toward modern English in these renderings, so I have opted for *struck down*, a reasonable modern equivalent

<sup>101</sup> Pai in 1Chron. 1:50

At the beginning of this chapter, it was my contention that this was information provided by Esau. However, this passage deals with the deaths of several successive kings who would rule over various tribes of Edomites. This means we need enough time for the Edomites to become large enough to warrant rulership by a king and enough time for the succession of several kings. This period of time would have been possibly during Joseph's time and extend through to the time of the Exodus. The phrase *prior to any king in Israel* make this passage anachronistic—that is, v. 31 was certainly added on sometime later, perhaps as late as the time of Solomon or David (it is possible that Moses could have added this; but it just wouldn't ring true unless there had been a king in Israel or, at least, talk of one first). Although we do not know any of these people from history, this does tell us that kingship was not conferred by birth into a royal family. Each ruler came from a different area and a different family, indicating that they could have even been elected.

We have followed eight kings through their reigns and there is a major change in the construction. There were no verbs between vv. 13–23 and 25–30. From vv. 31–39, each verse is packed with two verbs. At v. 40, we will return to the sentence structure of the earlier verses. It is highly unlikely that Esau, along with Jacob, has lived through eight succeeding generations of kings. Whereas the length of their reigns is not given and might be short; each king dies and is replaced. Therefore, although the information contained in vv. 13–30 likely came from Esau, as he would have easily lived through those generations, the following vv. 31–39 were very likely added later; in fact, much later. At this point in Genesis, we do not know by who or even for what reason. However, this matches almost word-for-word from the 1Chron. 1:43–50. The author of Chronicles obviously used the Genesis record in order to record what he did, along with the information contained in several other books, including Samuel and Kings. My educated guess is that he obtained this information from another set of records, but someone else came along and inserted this information from Chronicles into Genesis.

Our only clue as to time, aside from the names of the cities, is the war mentioned between Edom and Midian in Moab. That is, a king of Moab defeated the Midianites in Moab. Midian is directly east of the Gulf of Aqabah, with Edom north of them and Moab north of both of them. Recall that the Moabites were the result of the incest between Lot and his daughters, Edomites came from Esau, and the Midianites were descended through Abraham and his second wife, Keturah. However, we do not have yet from archeology nor do we have a record in Scripture, of this battle. In fact, because the Midianites were nomadic and therefore did not build permanent structures, we have practically nothing by way of archeological records concerning them.

The city, Rehoboth, is unknown to us, outside of its mention here and in the duplicate passage from Chronicles. The names of the last two kings are related to idolatry. Baal is one of the heathen deities and Hadar is a variant spelling of Hadad, the proper name of the storm god worshipped in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia since the time of Abraham. Two kings bore the name Hadar (Hadad), and one of Esau's sons carried the same name<sup>102</sup> (they are three different people, however). The last king mentioned, one of the Hadar's, seems to have the most information recorded about him and his death is not recorded, indicating that this record was originally written during his reign.

### The Chiefs of Esau

**These [are] the names of the chiefs of Esau according to their families and their dwelling places by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah<sup>103</sup>, chief Jetheth, chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, chief Magdiel, chief Iram; these [are] the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession, that is, Esau, the father of Edom. [Gen. 36:40–43]**

The difference between vv. 29–30 and vv. 40–43 is the former are Horite chiefs and the latter are Edomite chiefs, the Horites, again, being the original inhabitants of the land of Edom from whence Esau took one of his wives, Oholibamah. Unlike the previous lists of chiefs, most of these have not been named before. We do not know

<sup>102</sup> He is Hadar in Gen. 25:15 and Hadad in 1Chron. 1:30 in the KJV

<sup>103</sup> Aliah in 1Chron. 1:51

whether Timna and Oholibamah are the women mentioned in Gen. 36:5, 12 or not. It is likely that they are women of prominence, which is why Esau and his son married them.

And so we leave this unusual chapter in the Bible, which gives us a genealogical background of Esau and the family that Esau joined himself to. It is a sad situation that one so close to the promise, to whom the lion's share of Isaac's spiritual and financial inheritance should have gone to, was not the progenitor of the people of God. But **narrow is the gate and few that are that find it.**

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 37** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 37

### Genesis 37:1–36

#### The Outline of Genesis 37:

Vv. 1–4	Introduction to Joseph
Vv. 5–11	Joseph's dreams
Vv. 12–17	Joseph searches for his brothers
Vv. 18–28	Joseph's brothers plot against him and sell him into slavery
Vv. 29–30	Reuben's repentance
Vv. 31–36	Jacob's sons lie to him/Joseph's Destiny

#### Short Doctrines and Charts:

v. 2	<a href="#">These are the generations of...</a>
v. 25	<a href="#">Camels, Archeology and the Bible</a>
v. 25	<a href="#">Why the camel is so well-suited for desert travel</a>
v. 35	<a href="#">Scofield on Sheol</a>
v. 36	<a href="#">First Resolution of the Contradiction of Genesis 37 &amp; 39</a>

**Introduction:** Chapter 37 begins to center around Joseph, who is clearly one of the most important character of the book of Genesis. Approximately the same amount of space is devoted to Joseph as is devoted to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race. With the exception of one chapter, the rest of Genesis will be about Joseph (the Bible devotes 12 chapters to Abraham and 13 chapters to Joseph).

In this study, we will see that greater the privilege and blessing, greater the responsibility and greater the punishment. Joseph will be blessed in a material way and exalted by God beyond what has happened to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but we will also see God put Joseph *on the bench* for a two years because of one short sentence and one moment of misplaced trust (Joseph trusted in man rather than God).

In this chapter, we will see the jealousy felt by his brothers. One of the greatest mistakes made by Isaac and Rebekah was the favoritism which they showed toward their children. It is normal in the course of human events to have favorites in the realm of people. It is even normal to love one child more than another. However, that is not to be revealed in any way to the children. This caused almost lifelong jealousy between Jacob and Esau. It was not until twenty or so years prior to their father's death when they reconciled—yet they still lived in vastly separated areas. Joseph will also bear the brunt of the jealousy of his brothers in this chapter. Jacob makes it obvious that he prefers his sons Joseph over all the rest of his sons and this causes them to become quite envious to the point that they even plotted Joseph's death.

As to authorship: it is a difficult call. Joseph most likely wrote this narrative many years later when he was royalty in Egypt. Due to hindsight and the chance to talk with his father and his brothers, he was able to obtain some information which would not have been available to him at the time these events took place.

There are some reasons to believe that Judah wrote at least one chapter (Gen. 38) and possibly the chapter that we are studying now. It appears as though we have more insights as to the activities with the brothers and more inner thoughts of them are shared. Another possibility is Reuben, due to Gen. 37:22 (only Reuben would have known his plans to rescue Joseph). However, since it appears as though he and Judah are of a similar mind in this regard (compare Gen. 37:22 & 26–27), they possibly discussed this privately, giving Judah insights into Reuben's motivation. In any case, when they arrive in Egypt and are soon thereafter imprisoned, there was a lot of discussion of who did what and why they are in jail; and all of the details would have come out then (which Joseph would have heard as well).

The most popular view is that Moses authored Genesis. However, even though Moses undoubtedly wrote the next 4 books, those events he experienced. Moses experienced nothing in Genesis. Did the Jews in the time of Moses simply have a plethora of ancient stories, some accurate and some now, and Moses just chose from among those stories? Or was there an actual book (*not* necessarily in writing, but remembered word-for-word) that was known to many of the Jews? There are things written in the book of Exodus which clearly suggest that Moses and the people of Israel were not ignorant of this history. If some of this history was well-known to the Jews in the early part of Exodus, then why do we think that Moses needed to write an entirely new book or to edit together a new book (which would have been done long after the exodus).

Now, we find a lone verse here and there which indicates hindsight (particularly Gen. 36:31<sup>104</sup>). However, these glosses could have been added by anyone at any time.

It is my belief that the entirety of Genesis was maintained orally until Moses wrote down the oral tradition. Furthermore, there is no reason whatsoever which precludes the Genesis saints from actually recording the information which we find in Genesis (whether in their minds or in a written form). If the book of Genesis is accurate in terms of creation (which I believe it to be), it is likely that, man experienced some de-evolution along the way. Not only did his age decrease but I would suggest that his health and mentality decreased as well. So, whereas remembering the book of Genesis would have been quite easy for the early man, as time went on, people developed a written language in order to write stuff down, because they could not remember it all.

There is a clear transition from a civilization which did not write things down (carefully read the selling of the grave site to Abraham, where witnesses appear to play a very important part of the transaction); to the time of Moses, where God tells Moses to write stuff down.

The most reasonable alternative to a Mosaic authorship is what I have presented: the authorship of the portions of the Bible by those people about whom these portions are written. We are dealing with highly intelligent, successful businessmen throughout the line of Abraham. The fact that they were shepherds does not mean that they were stupid men wandering through the desert with four or five sheep and a handful of family. As we have seen in Gen. 14, Abraham had enough slaves and hired help to pursue four kings with an army of 318 men and defeat them. Both Isaac and Jacob also had great wealth and a huge number of servants and hirelings. Man's ability to write and record information predates Abraham considerably. We have Akkadian texts and records which date back to 2300 B.C., which takes us as far back as Gen. 10. It is thought that the Eblaite and Amorite languages might lie in a direct line prior to the Biblical Hebrew and we have thousands of tablets with recordings in both of those languages. However, they have not been fully studied and evaluated, although it is thought that many of the names found in Genesis will also appear in these tablets. The Hebrew that the Bible is written in dates back to at least 1500 B.C.—that is as far back as it can be verified—but it bears no resemblance whatsoever to any other European language, being written in a consonantal script from right to left. Since it was written in all consonants, the reader was required to have some knowledge of what it was that he was reading. For thousands of years, those who read the Holy Scriptures had to mentally or verbally insert the vowels in order to ascertain the meanings or to enunciate the words, because the vowels were not added until a millennium after the fact. Not only did they have to mentally insert the vowels as they read, they had to determine where words started and stopped,

---

<sup>104</sup> These are known as glosses. When the name of a city, for instance, changes, sometimes this is noted in the text, so that the reader knows where we are talking about. American history books may mention *New Amsterdam*, but, somewhere in the context, the name of the modern city sitting where New Amsterdam used to be is always given.

and where thoughts started and stopped, as there were no spaces or sentence (verse) divisions or chapter divisions in the original Hebrew.

Furthermore, there are many personal thoughts and emotions which are presented, which would not have been placed into an historical narrative written by some person a few hundred years later (like Moses).

My point in all this is that it is just as likely if not more likely that those involved in the events of Genesis also recorded the events. Their thoughts, feelings and the details found point to the history being recorded at that time as opposed to a recording of this information a few hundred or even a thousand years later<sup>105</sup>. However, as was also pointed out, these manuscripts were edited—a very few verses were added for clarification and by way of information and it is clear that Gen. 33 through 39 were written by possibly up to four different authors, kept in at least two and possibly three different locations, and pieced together a few centuries later.

As we study the next few chapters, we should keep in mind, the line of the Messiah will go through Judah. Why is that? Throughout most of these final chapters of Genesis, it would seem most logical for the Messiah to come through Joseph.

### Introduction to Joseph

**Now Jacob resided in the land where his father had sojourned—in the land of Canaan. These [are] the historical family records of Jacob:** [Gen. 37:1–2b]

Tōwl<sup>o</sup>dōth (תולדות) [pronounced *toh<sup>o</sup>-DOTH*] is found throughout Genesis and this word is often used to divide Genesis into different sections. It refers to descent or family and figuratively to history. This is the last of the twelve times it will be used in Genesis, so that we now have a background from which to examine this word and to see how it is used.

Let's look at the places where this word is found.

#### These are the generations of...

- Gen. 2:4a **This is the *history* [or the *generations*, the *account of*] the heavens and the earth when they were created.** From here we have the creation of man and woman, the fall, Cain and Abel and the birth of Seth.
- Gen. 5:1a **This is the book of the *generations* (or the *beginnings*) of Adam.** Then the creation of man is summarized and the line of Adam is followed for several generations unto the corruption of man in Gen. 6.
- Gen. 6:9a **These are the generations of Noah.** Noah and his building of the ark are examined and he and his family are followed through to the end of the flood.
- Gen. 10:1a **These are the *generations* (or the *genealogy*) of the sons of Noah.** This is followed by an extensive genealogy of his sons and it is carried out about ten generations. Gen. 10:32 is a summation of Gen. 10.
- Gen. 11:10a **These are the generations (or the *genealogy*) of Shem.** This verse is followed by the genealogy of Shem to Noah.
- Gen. 11:27a **These are the generations of Terah.** The names his immediate descendants, includes his death, and then follows Abraham (and a portion of Isaac's life) for the next 14 chapters.
- Gen. 25:12-13a **Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham. And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names in regard to their generations.** This is followed by a very short genealogy of Ishmael and his death.

<sup>105</sup>Very liberal interpretations place authorship a thousand years later, inasmuch as, they just do not care for all of the prophecy and the common themes which continue from the book of Genesis throughout all the Scriptures.



## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

These passages, along with the last couple usages (Gen. 25:19–36:1, 9) tell us that a genealogy of the person named is about to follow. The person named is occasionally examined, usually his genealogy is examined (but not always) and sometime a simple history is looked at. *In most cases*, the person recording the genealogy or recording the following history, lists one of his own progenitors by convention and in respect; so Abraham would be writing his own experiences, but they would fall under the heading, *these the generations of Terah* (or, *this is the family history of Terah*, which is a poorer word-for-word translation, but better English).

Our passage reads: **Now Jacob resided in the land where his father had sojourned—in the land of Canaan. These [are] the historical family records of Jacob:...** [Gen. 37:1–2b]

Therefore, in this passage, we would predict that Jacob will not be examined but his sons (in this case, specifically Joseph; but also Judah).

**Joseph, seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers. He was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, and Joseph brought an negative report concerning them to their father.** [Gen. 37:2b]

My memories of being taught about Joseph contained very few negatives about him. However, right here we find out one of the reasons that his brothers resented him at an early age. He was a tattletale. There is a time and a place and good reasons for a person to be a tattletale, but the first thing that we find out about Joseph is that he brings to Jacob an ill report concerning his brothers. Jacob, completely in the dark concerning what happened in the field, was more than happy to be kept abreast of the shepherding of his livestock. Although it is often normal for a younger son to tattle on his older brothers (sometimes his only defense), it is clear that his father encouraged this behavior.

We do not know what it was that Joseph's brothers did wrong, but we do know that Jacob was appreciative of this act of Joseph and he rewards Joseph:

**And Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children because he was to him the son of [his] old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves.** [Gen. 37:3]

There has been a lot of disagreement concerning this coat that was made for Joseph. For a very long time, people simply accepted the KJV, which translated this *a many colored coat*, which actually sounded pretty cool. We only find this adjective describing the coat in this passage and in 2Sam. 13:18–19. In neither passage are we able to put a clear fix on the meaning of this word. It is in the plural (which is why it is translated *many colors* or *long sleeves*) and it could mean that it was made from several materials. BDB translates this as a long garment or coat which reaches to the palms of the hands and to the soles of the feet. Generally a tunic had no sleeves and usually came down as far as the knees. It is thought that this coat had long sleeves and that it came down to the ankles. In any case, it was a luxurious robe, far better than what his brothers had. It was a robe which set Joseph apart from the hoi polloi, like perhaps an Armani suit would today. Thieme said that it was a coat connoting authority. Possibly the long sleeves indicates that the person wearing the garment was not a person who was going to do the hard, physical labor. Therefore, such a person would be considered the man in charge; the foreman. In any case, this was a kind of coat which the other brothers did not have, that Jacob did not make for them. This would have taken time and effort and such time and effort was not put into a similar gift for the other brothers.

**But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.** [Gen. 37:4]

Like father like son; Jacob has made exactly the same mistake with Joseph and the rest of his children as Isaac made with him and Esau. He showed clear preference of one child over the others, which is going to set into motion a series of events which would change their lives forever. These events will be intended to cause Joseph grief and pain, but God will take these things and mix them together for good (**And we know that God causes all thing to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His predetermined plan—Rom. 8:28**).

### Joseph's Dreams

**Now Joseph dreamed a dream and when he told [this dream] to his brothers, they only hated him the more. He said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed. Listen [lit., behold], we were binding sheaves in the field and I saw [lit., lo] my sheaf arise and it stood upright and I saw your sheaves gathered around [it] and they bowed down to my sheaf. [Gen. 37:5–7]**

For many years, but I did not know exactly what a sheaf is, let alone sheaves. In hearing the song *Bringing in the Sheaves*, I was not sure why one would want to. *Why bother? Why not just leave them outside?* Apparently, this is their grain which the bundle up, as we bundle hay. However, that does not make it difficult to understand the meaning of the dream.

Joseph's brothers understood the dream immediately, as do we. Did Joseph? Did he give his dream to rub this in or did it just weigh on his thinking? We are not told.

Whichever the case, the dream means that Joseph's brothers would do obeisance to him. This was a dream from God and he was very likely a believer. On the other hand, he was a goody-two-shoes, tattletale who was the kind of child that would share his report card with you as long as he knew his was better. If anything is going to irritate his older brothers, who already dislike him, it would be sharing this dream with them. It may have been appropriate to share this with his father Jacob, but Jacob should have given him more guidance as to how to deal with the animosity of his brothers, rather than simply indulge him.

**And his brothers said to him, "Will you indeed reign over us?" So they hated him all the more for his dreams and for his words. [Gen. 37:8]**

Their hatred was not justified. He said and did things which caused his brothers to feel animosity toward him; a little proper training would have averted that. However, what he did appears to have been encouraged by his father; and it is hard to hold someone responsible for the way that they are raised.

His brothers hated both the dreams that he had but also his words because he would bring these things to their attention. Joseph will become one of the greatest men of the Old Testament with incredible integrity; however, he was a somewhat odious child.

**Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Listen, I have dreamed another dream and I beheld the sun, the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." [Gen. 37:9]**

This dream is even more irritating than the previous dream because not only are the brothers bowing down to him, but all those in his general vicinity are bowing down to him. The sun and the moon are his mother and father (since his mother has died, he would have been *adopted* by probably the maid of his mother<sup>106</sup>). The gist of the meaning of his dreams are quite clear and Joseph may be presenting this in such a way as to say, "Listen; what do you think about this?" or "What do you suppose this means?" He knows what it all means; he is just telling his brothers, who probably bully him and intimidate him. When someone is smaller or younger, they fight back

---

<sup>106</sup> She probably took on many of the motherly chores anyway, being his mother's personal slave.

in different ways. They cannot afford a physical confrontation, so they get on the nerves of those who dislike them using various subtle methods.

Joseph may or may not have understood the first dream; but at the response of his brothers to the first dream, he probably understood what the second dream meant.

**However, when he told [this] to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream? Have you dreamed that we shall indeed come—your mother and your brothers—to bow ourselves to the ground before you?"** [Gen. 37:10]

Jacob did not mind the other dream; he loved Joseph more than his other children and had no problem with his other children (most of whom are fully grown at this time and are basically adults) bowing down before Joseph. However, he did have a problem with Joseph ruling over him. It was unheard of for the child to rule the father. The mind of those in the east and middle east was to revere their ancestors. This is why a section of Genesis always will begin *and these are the generations of*, although the section is about the son or grandson of the person named. Now Jacob is somewhat insulted in hearing this dream.

**Now his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.** [Gen. 37:11]

This might give us a clue as to how a portion of Genesis was put together. I don't know that Jacob is still recording Scripture at this point in time; furthermore, this is written in such a way as to require this portion being written long after the events (because Jacob keeps this information tucked away in the back of his mind). Jacob is upset over the dream and Joseph's brothers are extremely jealous of him and upset with him.

If Jacob did record any of this chapter, it would have only been the first 11 verses. However, it is just as likely that Joseph writes Genesis from this chapter forward.

### Joseph Searches for His Brothers

**Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem and Israel said to Joseph, "Aren't your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come—I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am [lit., behold me]."** [Gen. 37:12–13]

This is a situation wherein the rhetorical question is posed in the negative, but it demands an affirmative answer. *Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem (yes, they are).*

This indicates that some time has passed since they were all in Shechem. Recall that in Shechem, two of the brothers executed every male in a particular town because a son of one of the prominent men in the town raped their sister. For that reason they had to leave that area. Here, Joseph is at least 17, possibly older, he was born after the incident in Shechem, so it is at least 20 years after the Shechem incident. Because time had passed and possibly because of their reputation, the sons of Jacob were comfortable with keeping their livestock in that area.

There is the possibility that the brothers are not shepherding livestock here. See Bullinger's figures of Speech p. 114 and Ginsburg's *Introduction*, pp. 320, 325. There are almost a half-dozen verses which seem to involve livestock here, so I am not ready yet to rule out them having livestock.

**So he said to him, "Go now—see about the welfare of your brothers and of the flock and bring me word." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron and he came to Shechem.** [Gen. 37:14]

This is quite the distance away. Hebron is about 60–70 miles south of Shechem. Also, the sons are probably safe shepherding the flocks up near Shechem because they have certainly gained a reputation for what they did. It is unlikely that anyone from that area wants to test this reputation.

Here, Joseph is behaving like Jacob's right hand man. When Jacob wants him on a job, he does it. He keeps his father company and does occasional side jobs for him as his father's representative. This certainly would make his brothers upset with him. It doesn't sound as though they had any choice in the matter; Jacob just displayed his favoritism and chose Joseph.

As we will see, Joseph's brothers moved the flock out of Shechem.

**Then a man found him (and notice) wandering in the fields and the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" [Gen. 37:15]**

Because Joseph does not know this area too well, it is obvious to the few that he sees that he seems lost. He did find Shechem and now he is wandering around the area, possibly through the same field two or three times. He looks as though he has a purpose; but then he cannot seem to locate those whom he needs to find.

**He said, "I am seeking my brothers. I pray you tell (to) me where they are pasturing the flock." Then the man said, "They have gone away; for I heard it being said, "Let us go to Dothan." So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. [Gen. 37:16–17]**

We only get a piece of the conversation. They introduce each other and converse. The other man knows who Joseph is due to the reputation of Jacob's family in that area; and possibly because of their infamy, this stranger knows where they are. Dothan is another forty or fifty miles north-northwest from Shechem. Joseph gets explicit directions.

Once Joseph finds his way to the correct city, it is easy to find his brothers because they are shepherding such a huge flock of livestock. In fact, the flock is so large, that they had to take them on a large, circuitous route in order not to destroy the fertile grassland of that area due to overuse. This taking the flock to Dothan was not in their original plans (or not in the ones revealed to Jacob). Why would they do it? It is possible that they went that direction because they needed a wider route to shepherd their flocks; but, most likely, they went that direction to meet women. Keep in mind, these are young, unmarried men, in their late twenties and thirties, most likely. None of them have women friends because the population is so spread out and they have a great deal of work to do for their father. From a young age, they were given tremendous responsibility by Jacob. Even though Jacob failed in raising his children with regards to revealing his own preference for Joseph; and, it is possible that he did not raise them entirely properly when it came to relationship with YHWH Elohim, the God of the universe (as he did not begin to reach any sort of spiritual maturity until late in life), he did do one marvelous thing for them and that was to keep them occupied and responsible throughout their teen years. The one incident in Shechem and what will happen in this chapter tells us that these young men, without some proper training, could have become quite barbaric.

I've grown up in a generation and have seen several generations where far too much free time and far too little responsibility has been given to young people. They have been given far too many material things, very little personal guidance and real love (which is shown in discipline and training), and far too much spare time. When a child reaches his teens, it is time for that child to find out that the world does not revolve around him and his needs and desires. It is normal for teenagers to be self-centered beyond belief and at those years, their training and guidance is crucial. The most important time in a child's life with regards to personal growth and training is during the ages 0–5. Too often in the past few generations, training has been left to daycare and to the television. Once they reach their teens, they are beyond the control of their parents (if you do not exert proper authority and control when the child is under 7, then they will not fear or respect you when they reach their teens). During the teen years, the parents then try to get through this time period, appeasing their children and praying that the teens period will last less than a decade. After correct training from age 0-10 or so, the child needs to have responsibilities that the other members of the family depend upon. They need to clean the house, their rooms, mow their lawn, weed their flower beds, make the meals, wash and wax the car. In Jacob's family, they were responsible for his flocks—this was the family wealth. It was not unlike giving a 20 or 30 year old the family bank account or assets to manage. The wealth of the family depended upon the successful caring for this huge flock. Their inheritance depended upon how well they did with the family flocks. This kind of responsibility got eleven

young men with leanings toward criminal behavior through their teens without too many problems. Given their same disposition, temperament today, and without the responsibility and training, most of Jacob's family would be in jail by age 30. Certainly, Jacob, like all parents, made mistakes, some serious, in the raising of his children. However, he did give them with great duties and obligations so that in their youth, at least they did not go out and rape the local female populace (which is indicative of the self-centered male without training).

Jacob's primary failure was his favoritism of Joseph. He seems to have taught his sons about the God of Abraham; but it is unclear as to the extent of their spiritual training.

Jacob's boys had a certain undeniable reputation among those in the Shechem area, making it difficult for them to get beyond general introductions with the women that they would meet.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, they, in their realm of responsibility, chose to take in a little more area. This is known as taking some initiative and being creative in their area of charge.

### Joseph's Brothers Plot Against Him and Sell Him into Slavery

**They [Joseph's brothers] saw him afar off and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him.** [Gen. 37:18]

This tells us that, even though most of them are out of their teens, they have a mean, vicious streak brought on by jealousy and hatred. When Joseph is seen from a distance, one of them, half-seriously, suggests, "Why don't we kill him; then who will have to bow down to him?"<sup>108</sup> They all dislike Joseph and they do not like having to work out in the field while Joseph gets the easy assignments. They resent the favoritism their father has shown toward Joseph and they bear malice toward him because of his dreams. This suggestion, while possibly not serious at first, is seized upon and verbally explored in the short time that it takes Joseph to approach them. This is not unlike a gang mentality. In some gangs, alone they may not have enough to commit acts of evil and viciousness on their own; however, together, their evil is magnified. It is the exact same for a mob mentality. Mobs act in unison and commit acts of violence that individuals in that mob would not normally commit on their own. There is a real psychology operating in this realm. We see this first in children who, as a group, pick on the weaker child verbally or physically. I have seen things in the class room concerning children who do and say vicious things to a person in the outgroup which are directly influenced by their peers in this group situation. Even in a mob under mob psychology, we have individual responsibility to God; the undue influence of a mob or a gang does not get us off the hook with God.

With regards to authorship, vv. 18–19, although information Joseph could have obtained years later, more naturally flows from one of the brothers conspiring to kill Joseph. These are things that a participant in the action would recall more than Joseph. However, two decades in the future, Joseph's brothers will be in captivity before him and they will discuss this very incident amongst one another (not knowing that Joseph is with them or that he understands what they are saying). So most or all of the details could have been gotten at that time.

**They said each to his brother, "Look, this very master of dreams [has] approached. Now come let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say a wild beast has devoured him and we shall see what will become of his dreams."** [Gen. 37:19–20]

Most translations read something along the lines of *behold, the dreamer cometh*. *The dreamer* is three words. Ba'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced *BAH-ġah*] means *master, owner; even the god* [of dreams]. This is the same word as is used for the Phœnician deity, Baal. Hallâzeh (הַלְזֵה) [pronounced *hahl-law-EH*] means *this particular* or *this very* and is used very little in the OT (Gen. 24:65). This is associated with the definite article and châlôwm (חַלּוֹם) [pronounced *khuh-LOHM*], which means *dreams*. The brothers had nicknames for Joseph, ones which became rather extravagant. Merely translating these 3–4 words as *the dreamer*, they had something more elaborate and

<sup>107</sup> I am simply making a supposition here; I do not know this to be a fact.

<sup>108</sup> This is conjecture.

demeaning to say. Joseph was the master, the lord, the god of dreams. This is a title given to Joseph in derision. Said with the correct vocal inflection, this is strictly sarcasm.

They have been discussing what to do with him, and once he has come into earshot, this is said. We can ascertain that because *approached* is in the Qal perfect, meaning the action is complete. God the Holy Spirit chose not to tell us which of the brothers said these things (likely, it was several of them). They all recalled what Joseph dreamed; that they would bow down to him. If he is dead, then they wondered aloud what would become of his dreams.

They also begin to get their story straight so that they can agree on what happened to him when they return to their father. They can't bring back a body, so they decide that a wild beast devours him. The word for *devour* is 'âkal (אָכַל) [pronounced *aw-KAHL*] and it is the simple word for *eat, consume, devour*. To give you an idea as to how Hebrew works, this verb is in the Qal perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular suffix. The Qal is the simple stem and the perfect refers to completed action (generally; but it can be completed action in the past, present or future). *Beast* is in the singular feminine, so *beast* is the subject of this verb. The singular masculine suffix refers to Joseph and is translated *him*.

**But when Reuben heard, he rescued him out of their hands saying, "Let's not take his life [lit., strike his soul]," and said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit in the desert, but do not lay a hand upon him" that he might rescue him out of their hand and to restore him to his father.** [Gen. 37:21–22]

From Gen. 34, we can guess that the one precipitating this act were Simeon and Levi, two men who solved problems with violence. They had done it before; there was no retribution; and this hardened their hearts. Here is how they thought to deal with all problems; just kill whoever the offending party was. It was a simple, all-purpose solution. They were also well-known in Shechem and if they committed an act like this in Shechem, the truth might get back to their father. Here they are over 100 miles from their father and they can act in secrecy. Furthermore, they are less-renown in these parts, so it is less likely for a problem to develop due to recognition of who they were. It is possible that Judah also had a great deal of input here (we will see that he has some character defects himself).

Reuben had to think fast. He is the oldest brother and he should have taken control of the situation properly. He did not have to be devious. You can tell that his mind is thinking as fast as it possibly can. He first tells them not to kill Joseph; but he immediately, so not to be thought of as a woose, had to formulate an alternate plan. His brothers have their hearts set on killing Joseph and obtaining their revenge. Reuben has to provide them with a reasonable alternative. He figures if his younger brothers is to throw Joseph into a pit, then he can rescue Joseph later. He was weak, but still more mature than his younger siblings. He did not take part in the Shechem massacre, although he certainly also wanted to avenge his sister, Dinah.

This causes me to think about authorship. Here we see the motivation behind what Reuben said. Again, this could have come out when the brothers were expressing guilt over what they had done to Joseph (two decades from now).

**So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped Joseph of his robe—the robe with the long sleeves that he wore—and they seized him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.** [Gen. 37:23–24]

The brothers despised Joseph for this robe. The long sleeves perhaps did mean some recognition of authority, as Joseph was there on assignment directly from his father. He did not have to do the grunt work. This was a coat unlike any which their father had made for them and it represented to them his favoritism of Joseph over them. Without even knowing what they were going to do with the robe, they tore it off Joseph. *Seize* is the simple Qal imperfect of *to take, to grab*; the context made *seize* a better choice. The pit is a dry well. It is deep enough to dump Joseph into so that he cannot get out by himself. There was no water in it tells us what sort of a pit this is. The Hebrew word is *bōwr* (בֹּוֹר) [pronounced *bohr*] means *pit hole, especially that dug as a well or as a jail*.

This dried cisterns or wells were used in those days as *prisons*; when Jeremiah was cast into a *dungeon* in Jer. 38:6, it is the same Hebrew word.

**Then they sat down to eat and looked up and they saw (and beheld) a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Bilead with their camels, bearing gum, balm and myrrh on their way to carry it down to Egypt.** [Gen. 37:25]

The first item that they carried was an aromatic gum or a spice or a plant from which those came. The second item was perhaps a resin from a tree, used as medicine (it is used for national disaster in the figurative sense in Jer. 8:22 46:11 51:8). Since we do not know exactly what it is, we could simply call it an organic medicinal drug. The third item mentioned was *an aromatic gum exuded by leaves of cistus rose*, to quote BDB. The NASB calls it a resinous bark. James Freeman notes that these are medicines and drugs used in embalming procedures by the Egyptians, who depended upon these caravans for such things. None of this sounds like stuff I would want to trade for, which is perhaps why I would have taken silver instead of any of this stuff in trade for Joseph. Maybe that is the point of the selling price of Joseph noted later in this passage.

Freeman quotes a description of another caravan as the camels traveling four abreast, the population being divided into several groups or companies. The caravan described consisted of several thousand camels. Many traders traveled in these large groups for protection from thieves along the roadside.

### Camels, Archeology and the Bible

There are several places where archeology does not completely agree with the Bible. This should not worry us because there have been several areas in the past where archeology flat contradicted the Bible and later reconciled itself to Biblical history. One of these present areas of disagreement concerns camels—*gâmâl* in the Hebrew (גַּמָּל) [pronounced *gaw-MAWL*], which means *beast of burden, camel*. The transliteration being so close and finding no opposing view in BDB or Strong's. However, because a wall painting in the grave of Khnum-hopte at Beni-Hasan (circa 1900 B.C.), shows a caravan with donkeys, it is thought that transport by camels was unknown at that time. Also, it is strange is that archeological evidence that we have today seems to indicate that the Egyptians apparently did not use the camel until a little after 300 B.C., a long time after these events in the Bible. The only theory which I have heard concerning this is that camels to the Egyptians, as they were to the Israelites, were considered unclean animals for food and, in the Egyptian mind, taboo as well. On the other hand, we have seen the camel several times in the Bible—with Abraham's servant (Gen. 24), with Jacob (Gen. 30:43 31:17, 34 32:7, 15) and here.

Job, who is probably coterminous in time with the patriarchs or with the subjection of Israel to the Egyptians, is said to have owned 7000 sheep and 3000 camels. It is *possible* that the numbers are incorrect in Job, as there are problems with Hebrew numbers; and this is said because there is some contention that not only do we not have archeological evidence of camels from that ancient time in Arabia, but that there was not enough land for that much livestock to graze on. On the other hand, with the way that the middle east is described in the Bible, I wonder if it was not a lot more fertile in Old Testament times and that the area was over-grazed at some point in time, leading to the vast amount of desert which we see today. While I am in the midst of theorizing, I now wonder aloud if Egypt may not have been more fertile, at least near to Nile, and therefore, camel use was not the driving necessity that it would be several centuries later. Recall that the middle east was settled by early man shortly after the flood waters began to subside; and the more the water recedes, the more that desert area increases. So, what Israel and Egypt looked like then is probably dramatically different than what these countries look like now.

## Camels, Archeology and the Bible

Further, what is interesting is that camels will only be mentioned three more times in the entire Pentateuch—once in early Exodus (Ex. 9:3) and twice as prohibited as food (Lev. 11:4 Deut. 14:7). In Judges and 1Samuel, we will see them with more frequency again. The main area of contention is that some archeologists and zoologists believe that camels were not domesticated until several hundred years later<sup>109</sup>. At least, up until 1980, we have found no mention of them in any ancient Egyptian literature dating back to the time of Genesis or in any of the Mari documents. Furthermore, we do not find them illustrated in Egypt's galleries of fauna.

To me, someone who is not an archeologist, it seems unlikely that you could have camels in the desert for millenniums and not have some nomad smart enough to try to domesticate them. That they are missing from Egyptian literature and *art* (for lack of a better word) of this time is problematic, but not distressing. Recently there has been found a limestone receptacle shaped like a camel carrying a load that dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C., (long before the time of Abraham). According to ZPEB, generally quite liberal for being a conservative work, mentions that evidence has also been found dating camels to the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. and then they have been tied to 1300 B.C. *The Bible Almanac* also mentions that we have archeological evidence that the camel was used as a pack animal around 3500 B.C. in Turkstan, indicating that it was probably domesticated long before that.

When I originally did this research (circa 1996), I did not have access to the internet; nor was there a lot to be found on the internet anyway. However, a little research today<sup>110</sup> reveals *Dromedaries may have first been domesticated by humans in Somalia and southern Arabia, around 3,000 BC, the Bactrian in central Asia around 2,500 BC.*<sup>111</sup> So, whereas this thing about camels being a real point of disagreement between the Bible and what we know about ancient history does not appear to be an area of strong disagreement any more.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Although ZPEB claims a camel's suitability for the desert is over exaggerated, there are areas in which the camel is apparently designed with the desert in mind:

### Why the camel is so well-suited for desert travel

- ▣ Their long legs keep their body a comfortable distance from the burning heat reflected off the sand.
- ▣ It has a naturally insulated body via its thick, wool coat.
- ▣ It has very little body temperature variance and perspires little.
- ▣ The camel can survive for a long period of time without food and water. When it drinks, it can inhale 25 gal. of water within ten minutes.
- ▣ Its hump, made up of muscle and fat, becomes flabby after long desert trips, and must be restored.
- ▣ They can move at speeds of 8–10 miles per hour.
- ▣ A camel can carry up to 500 lbs. on its back.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

This caravan of Ishmaelites were taking a circuitous route to Egypt. Rather than go straight down the King's Highway, they went west or northwest from Gilead to come to Dothan. Why would they do something like that? They were traders who likely came up from Arabia (which is east from Egypt) up along the King's Highway, and did some trading, and, at Gilead, crossed over north or northwest. It was their particular trade route. Also, on this

<sup>109</sup> It is the contention of Werner Keller, who wrote *The Bible as History*, that the *invention* of the camel (i.e., the domestication of the camel) did not take place until the time of the Judges when the Midianites pulled many camel raids upon the Israelites

<sup>110</sup> I am writing this in 2016.

<sup>111</sup> From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camel> accessed October 19, 2016.



or a very similar trade route were a caravan of Midianites, conducting their business around the same time. Both were descendants from Abraham and his two wives besides Sarah.

**Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood. come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and let us not lay our hand upon him for he is our own brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him.** [Gen. 37:26–27]

What has occurred is that Joseph's brothers have tossed him into the pit and have gone off to discuss what they will do with him. They are some distance away from him. Since this is a dry well that they put him in, it is would be reasonable to hypothesize that there were no functioning wells in the immediate vicinity. They had to drink, they had to water their flock and they had to discuss what was going to happen to Joseph. Whereas Joseph would have been privy to the first arguments delivered by Reuben, he would not have heard this. How he found out, whether it was years later when speaking privately to Reuben, or whether somehow the Midianites heard this when traveling thorough, we do not know (it is more like the former than the later). In any case, Judah and the other brothers had been convinced not to kill Joseph, and then argued in such a way that they could make a dollar off of this and they could get rid of Joseph at the same time.

**Then Midianite traders passed by and they pulled up and lifted Joseph out of the pit and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 shekels of silver. Then they [the Ishmaelites] took Joseph to Egypt.** [Gen. 37:28]

Mâshak<sup>e</sup> (מָשַׁךְ) [pronounced *maw-SHAKH*<sup>e</sup>] means *to draw* and it has a great many applications, including *to sow, to develop, to remove*, and I have translated it *to pull up* to go with the context. The next verb, 'âlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], means *to ascend, to go up*, and most people will recognize its similarity to Allah, the Muslim god. It also has a great many applications, but the context and the two verbs together mean that the Midianites dropped a rope down into the well, and pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the well. They sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites while the other eleven are discussing what will be done with Joseph.

The money is a problem for some. Some archeologists and those who worship at the feet of same are concerned that there was no coinage at that time. This does seem to indicate that Joseph was paid for in coins. However, weight was involved here and it was so frequently that rarely did the writer or speaker even use the word for weight but just said 20 silver, meaning 20 *shekels* (or whatever weight) of silver. These were not coins, per se, as we are familiar with. God even encouraged the Israelites to have a standardized system of coinage when He required them to be certain that the shekel was exactly 20 gerahs in weight (see Num. 3:47 Lev. 19:35–36). We will find coins later. Archeologists have found evidence of coinage dating to the middle of the second millennium B.C., shortly after this era<sup>112</sup>; however, the first clear Biblical mentions of coinage is not until Ezra 8:27, around 458 B.C. It takes time for some ideas to catch on and the ancient world would be slower than today due to the lack of mobility among the populace. The traders primarily kept others informed of events from their part of the world.

### Reuben's Repentance

**When Reuben returned to the pit and, when he saw Joseph was not in the pit [lit., behold—Joseph not in the pit], he tore his clothes, returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is gone, and I, where shall I go?"** [Gen. 37:29–30]

We don't know what Reuben's personal plans were at this point, except, from v. 22, that he would release Joseph and restore him to his father. Reuben apparently has respect for his father's feelings for Joseph and since Joseph is the youngest and since he is the oldest, Reuben has a responsibility toward him (as all older siblings should have toward their younger).

<sup>112</sup> A gold talent and two gold half-talents were discovered in a twelfth-century grave in Cyprus; Egyptian wall paintings show copper ingots being offered in tribute to Pharaoh Thutmose III (1501–1447 B.C.)

This is the first time in the Bible where we see someone tearing their own clothing in grief. Clothing was hand-made and took a great deal of time. No one owned clothing as we do in the 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, but each had a very few pieces of clothing. To tear one's own clothing was often to tear the only item of clothing like that one owned. It was obviously a sign of great distress and grief. Reuben, as the eldest, had failed in his responsibility toward his youngest brother and failed in his responsibility to his father. And being older and less susceptible to sibling rivalry than the rest, had warmer feelings toward Joseph.

What he said at the end would have been said alone, by the pit at first, and then possibly to his brothers. It is obviously a way of expressing grief due to his own lack of responsibility. He was to protect Joseph and watch out for that which belonged to his father and here he failed. *Where can I go?* is a rhetorical question which means how could he face his father and his father's grief, having failed so miserably?

### Jacob's Sons Lie to Him/Joseph's Destiny

**Then they took Joseph's robe and killed a male-goat and dipped the robe into the blood. Then they sent the long robe with the sleeves and had it taken to their father and said, "This we have found. Please [cause yourself to] examine the robe—is it your son's or not?"** [Gen. 37:31–32]

The Piel imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine plural of *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAKH*], which means *to send away, to send for, to send out*. This means that all the brothers did not go, but they sent a few of them or possibly even a trusted servant with the bloodied clothing. They claimed not know what had happened to him, but they did know that the robe was his (it was the very one that they all despised).

The other verb used with regards to this coat is *bôw'* (בָּוֵא) [pronounced *boh*] means simply *to go, to come*. A majority of the words found in Genesis are some of the most common words found in the Bible. Very few times do we come across a word, particularly a verb, which is not found in two dozen or more places elsewhere in the OT. This is in the Hiphil imperfect—the Hiphil being the causative stem. They caused this robe to be taken (or, *to go*) to their father—but many of them did not have the nerve to go with it to him.

**And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe—a wild beast has devoured him—Joseph is without a doubt torn to pieces."** [Gen. 37:33]

The word I translated *examine* in v. 32, is the same word used in v. 33 and translated *recognized*. The word is *nâkar* (נָכַר) [pronounced *naw-KAHR*] and it means *to look at something intensely, to scrutinize, and recognition* of an object is implied. It is used over 50 times in the OT and the difference in these verses is the morphology of the verb. In v. 32, it is found in the Hiphil imperative (associated with an entreaty of courtesy), 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular. The Hiphil is the causative stem wherein usually the object of the verb participates in the action of the verb. However, here it means that Jacob is to force himself (or, cause himself) to examine the robe. It is one of those things which he must force himself to do, however difficult. In v. 33, this word is found in the Hiphil imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, 3<sup>rd</sup> feminine singular suffix. The Hiphil is the portion which helps to imply to us that recognition is involved (this verb is not found in the Qal). The imperfect means that Jacob would examine it, he would think of his son, he would examine another portion (he knew this coat well since he made it himself), and it would cause him grief, and he would look at it again. The 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular here means that Jacob is subject of the verb (in v. 32, the 2nd person singular goes with the imperative mood). The suffix means that it is the coat, which is in the feminine gender, is what is being recognized.

What is said by Jacob was certainly remembered by the unlucky servant or the few brothers who had delivered this news. The first thing that his brothers would ask this servant upon their return to their home is *how did he take it; how did he react? What did he say?* What we have here in regards to what Jacob said are bare bones phrases. It is possible that he did not react with this entire sentence, but he probably said a number of things. These three phrases were what stood out in the servant's mind when he relayed this information to Jacob's sons. The person or persons allowed Jacob to form his own conclusion concerning Joseph. *Torn to pieces* is one word used twice. This is called a polyptoton [pronounced *po-LYP-tō-ton*]. First we have the Qal infinitive absolute and

then the Pual perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *ʔāraph* (טָרַף) [pronounced *taw-RAHF*] and it means *to tear into pieces*; the Pual is the intensive passive, which means that Joseph, the subject of the sentence, received the action of the intensive use of this verb. Prior to this, the Qal infinitive absolute should be translated *in tearing*. Together, they make this a very intensive use of this particular verb.

**Then Jacob tore his clothing and put sackcloth upon his loins and mourned for his son many days.** [Gen. 37:34]

Saq (שַׂק) [pronounced *sahk*] is a coarse, loose material through which water can run. It was dark or black and usually made from the hair of goats and or camels. It was used as material that one would carry things around in—a sack, if you will—or it was used to strain liquids. This is the first use of this word in the Old Testament. We find a similar use in the book of Job, the events of which occurred during this time, which tells us that it was also worn during times of mourning. We do not know how Reuben, Jacob or Job came to tear their clothing at a moment of grief, but seeing that Reuben and Jacob both did it, indicates that (1) it was a semi-common practice during times of grief which immortalized in Scripture and remained with the Jews as a custom for several millenniums; or, (2) when Jacob was told that Reuben had torn his own clothing, he followed suit<sup>113</sup>; or, (3) the book of Job was extant at this time and they were both following the precedent set in his writings. I discount the latter because Job also sat in ashes and neither Jacob nor Reuben did that (although the sitting in ashes could be indicative of feeling sorry for oneself).

**And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "I will go down to my son mourning [to] Sheol." Thus his father wept for him.** [Gen. 37:35]

His sons had to return to him after the original shock of losing Joseph had set in. They just did not want to have to face Jacob, as they were guilty in this situation (even though he did not know it at the time). What is contained in this verse is Sheol, which we will not fully examine, but we will begin to set up an understanding of this word as used in the Bible. We need to look at the entire sentence structure here.

Yārad (יָרַד) [pronounced *yaw-RAHD*] means *to descend, to go downwards, to go to a lower region*. In the Qal imperfect, it is the normal use of the verb where the action is not viewed in its entirety but in increments or as a continuous or incomplete action. Jacob is not ready to join Joseph yet in death. Like most of the verbs in Genesis, it is one of the most common verbs in the Old Testament.

The preposition used with his son is *ʿel* (אֶל) [pronounced *ehl*] and it means *motion towards, to* and it can mean *with* or *among*. So far we have a complete sentence, then Jacob breaks down and describes how his journey to the grave will be—in mourning. Actually, no preposition is used; just the simple adjective describing himself.

Furthermore, the word Sheol has no preposition. This is the first use of this word and it has been unfortunately rendered either *hell* or *the grave*. *Sh<sup>o</sup>ʿōl* has obviously been transliterated, which is the best thing to do when it is a technical word that you do not know the exact meaning of. The Hebrew is (שְׁאוֹל) [pronounced *Sh<sup>o</sup>ʿol*], and it is used properly for the underworld, or the place where people go when they are dead. It is a place where both believers and unbelievers went in the Old Testament.

Here, Jacob is a believer and he expects to see his son in Sheol. King David expected the same thing when his young son died (before the age of accountability). The body goes into the grave in both the Old and New Testaments, but we do not know whether within the earth itself is figurative language or whether that is where mankind dwelt (in spirit form). There are apparently two or three compartments; one for believers, one for unbelievers (between which there is a great gulf fixed), and one for the angels which sinned, which left their first estate, who copulated with mankind before the flood in Gen. 6. At some point in time when it becomes more important in the future, we will cover this subject in more depth.

---

<sup>113</sup> Forgive me

Dr. C.I. Scofield's KJV Bible was the first Bible that I ever owned which I actually read and studied from. I eventually went to a NASB, not because the notes or the translation was better, but because the translation was more modern and understandable. Although I had gotten to a point to where I could read the Old English and be quite comfortable with it (as was the case with many Biblical scholars prior to me), I still longed for something written in *English*, so to speak. I have since developed a keen respect for the KJV translation. It is a marvelous balance between a literal, word-by-word translation, giving even respect to the word order, and a readable Bible with great literary significance and beauty. Unfortunately, he a person about whom I know next-to-nothing. Thieme has mentioned that he was a lawyer with a gift of taking great theological concepts and reducing them in volume to present clear and concise Christian doctrine without watering down the material. One could take almost many of the concepts found in the great, four-volume (originally eight volume) set of Chafer's *Systematic Theology* and find it in the small margins of a Scofield Bible.

One of the notes in the margins of the Scofield Bible sets up an analogy between Joseph and Jesus Christ. Joseph was a *type* of Christ (as were many Old Testament saints). The events recorded about their lives closely parallel the life on earth of our Lord.

This is what Scofield had to say about Sheol:

### Scofield on Sheol

Sheol is, in the Old Testament, the place to which the dead go.

- (1) Often, therefore, it is spoken of as the equivalent of the grave, merely, where all human activities cease; the terminus toward which all human life moves (for example (Gen. 42:38) grave (Job. 14:13) grave (Psalm 88:3) grave
- (2) To the man "under the sun," the natural man, who of necessity judges from appearances, sheol seems no more than the grave — the end and total cessation, not only of the activities of life, but of life itself. (Eccles. 9:5 Eccles. 9:10).
- (3) But Scripture reveals sheol as a place of sorrow (2Sam. 22:6 Psalm 18:5 Psalm 18:116 Psalm 18:3); in which the wicked are turned (Psalm 9:17) and where they are fully conscious; (Isa. 14:9–17 Ezek. 32:21) see, especially, (Jonah 2:2) what the belly of the great fish was to Jonah that sheol is to those who are therein). The sheol of the Old Testament and hades of the New Testament

C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Habak. 2:5.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Meanwhile, the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.** [Gen. 37:36]

Essentially, the most common explanation for the apparent contradiction here is, sometimes Midianite should be Medanite (or, Midanite).

### First Resolution of the Contradiction of Genesis 37 & 39

There are a small number of individuals whose negative volition is so great that they search for contradictions in the Bible. Here is one which is often seized upon. According to most translations of the Bible (not the corrected one above):

19. Judah suggests to his brothers that they sell Joseph to the caravan of Ishmaelite traders (Gen. 37:27)
20. Midianite traders remove Joseph from the dried well and sell him to the Ishmaelite traders (Gen. 37:28)
21. The Midianite traders sell Joseph to the Egyptians (Gen. 37:36)
22. The Ishmaelites took Joseph down to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer (Gen. 39:1)

## First Resolution of the Contradiction of Genesis 37 & 39

The main problem here obviously is that in one verse the Midianite traders sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites, in another the Ishmaelites sell him to the Egyptians, and in another the Midianites sell Joseph to the Egyptians. Being that these verses are so close together and probably edited (if not written) by the same person, if there were a contradiction, and the Bible were 100% the product of religious men, you would think that they would change a word or two here in order to eliminate the contradiction. However, the Bible is the mind of Christ, created perfectly by God by the hand of man, and this set of verses has not been changed over the years for several reasons: There is no contradiction; Scribes had too much respect for God's Word to alter it, even had they perceived a contradiction; God's Word, in the original languages in the autographs has no contradictions.

The problem is fairly simple to resolve: in most translations, this verse, instead of Medanite, this word is translated Midianite (even in Owen's Analytical Key Bible—although the words are different in the Hebrew). We will have to sort this out. In v. 28 we have the Hebrew word, Mid<sup>e</sup>yânîy ( מִדְיָאֲנִי ) [pronounced *mid-yaw-NEE*] and it is derived from the Midian—Mid<sup>e</sup>yân ( מִדְיָאֵן ) [pronounced *Mid-YAWN*], who is a son of Abraham and Ketura whom we have studied earlier. However, he had a brother, Medan—M<sup>e</sup>dân ( מֵדָן ) [pronounced *med-AWM*], from whom are descended the Medanites—M<sup>e</sup>dânîy ( מֵדָאֲנִי ) [pronounced *med-aw-NEE*]. In the original manuscripts, no vowels were used, only consonants, so the names were even closer—see the chart below:

Midian	MDYN	מִדְיָאֲנִי		Medan	MDN	מֵדָן
S# 4080: Gen. 25:2ii 1Chron. 1:32ii and many others				S# 4091: Gen. 25:2i 1Chron. 1:32i only		
Midianite	MDYNY	מִדְיָאֲנִי		Medanite	MDNY	מֵדָאֲנִי
S# 4084: Gen. 37:28 and many others				S# 4092: Gen. 37:36 only		

It is not abnormal to have similar names like this; some parents today name their children with very similar names: Diane and Dana; Christopher and Christine; Jason and Justin. What has obviously happened is the Midianites and the Medanites have been confused by some scholars for centuries because their names are so similar. Their confusion has become our confusion; however, just a rudimentary understanding of the original language bails us out. The Midianites became a famous people and the Medanites became absorbed by the Ishmaelites. At this point in time they, under the auspices of the Ishmaelites, retained some of their national identity; yet, after this, they are never again seen as a separate group.

In points, here is what happened:

1. Joseph's brothers intended to sell him to the Ishmaelite traders.
2. Some Midianite traders found Joseph while the brothers were discussing what they were going to do with him.
3. The Midianites took Joseph out of the pit and sold him to men in the Ishmaelite trading caravan—specifically to some Medanites, who were historically and culturally in the process of being assimilated into the Ishmaelite family.
4. These Medanites sold Joseph to the Egyptians, although the Egyptians viewed it as purchasing him from Ishmaelites.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

**Genesis 38** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 38

### Genesis 38:1–30

#### Outline of Chapter 38:

- vv. 1–11 [Judah's mistress and their children](#)
- vv. 12–19 [Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar](#)
- vv. 20–23 [The search for the temple prostitute](#)
- vv. 24–30 [Tamar's pregnancy and delivery](#)

#### Charts:

- v. 5 [The Meaning of Chezib](#)
- v. 5 [Memories from 1994/2016](#)
- v. 15 [Hebrew Glossary for Prostitute and other Nasty Words](#)
- v. 30 [A Summation of the Reasons for Recording Genesis 39](#)

**Introduction:** I rarely read the work of another person before I begin to work on a chapter, for fear of undo influence. Once I have finished with the general exegesis, then I go to a hundreds of different sources and fill in some details. However, with Chapter 38, after reading a portion of it, I went to J. Vernon McGee for a synopsis and the short, no-nonsense explanation for which he was famous. It seems as though the Bible here goes off on this unusual, inexplicable tangent. It all has a reason and a purpose for being there (even if we are not sharp enough to discern them). So it is with this chapter. There was a pervasive immorality in the land of Canaan, an immorality that the Jews had to be separated from.

We will follow a portion of Judah's life, a person that we may mistakenly thought to be a reasonably righteous man. Reuben had suggested the selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites, but only as a cover to rescue Joseph (but Reuben failed to act quickly enough<sup>114</sup>).

We will see in this chapter that Judah was a poor excuse for a believer, self-righteous with a double standard. Part of this is character defect and part of it is the world in which he lived. He was unduly influenced by the immorality of the Canaanites (many of whom were later executed by God's command for their depravity), as were his brothers. God had to remove the Jews so that they did not end up like the other peoples of that land. Furthermore, we find the line of Christ in this chapter, where we would not expect to find it.

As McGee pointed out, everything which is in the Bible is God's Word and is therefore true, but this does not mean that God approves of everything which occurred. It is simply an honest record of what has happened. Our understanding of the rest of Scripture along with the customs and mores of that day, allow us to comment and to exegete.

With regards to authorship, it is difficult to tell. I am leaning more and more toward Joseph or Reuben writing a majority of the previous chapter and Judah writing this one; all later to be combined with the writings of Jacob and Joseph and edited either by Joseph or Moses. The events recounted here would have been known by a variety

<sup>114</sup> And he should have exercised his own personal authority instead of being devious.

of people, but Judah would know the majority of them, as he was involved. The time frame is quite easy to pinpoint because of the information given to us about Joseph in other chapters. This chapter has to run parallel to the life of Joseph, from being taken into slavery to the point where he sees his brothers again. Based on information from other chapters, 22 years is the length of the events found in this chapter.

Although it is possible that the events of this chapter begin prior to Joseph being sold into slavery, that is quite unlikely. Judah will separate from his family, and this will appear to be a fairly strong act of separation. Most of the time, a choice like that would be precipitated by something—and what makes more sense than for Judah to separate from his family rather than to continue lying, along side of his brothers, about what happened to Joseph. You may be able to lie to your father once or twice; but it is very difficult to continue a lie that clearly affects the emotional well-being of your father. I would say that Judah could not longer deal with this, and just went out on his own, which is represented by the events recorded in this chapter of Genesis.

So, the events of this chapter appear to run parallel to the selling of Joseph into slavery and Judah apparently reunites with his family when the famine strike them all (causing the brothers to all travel as a family to Egypt).

This chapter of Genesis is clearly a separate document from the one which later gives us Joseph's history in Egypt. However, that does not mean that Joseph did not *write* the final composition of these events.<sup>115</sup> Obviously, Joseph would be too far removed to know by time and space to know all that transpired in the life of Judah. However, when he reunites with his family, there will likely be times when they share their histories with one another. Although this chapter does not fit in seamlessly with Gen. 37 and 39, there is at least one other chapter which clearly was experienced by the other sons of Jacob and not by Joseph, but was placed into the Word of God, the account of this final quarter of Genesis. Moses would have been too far removed from it by time to know anything of what happened here, apart from learning this information by hearing it and memorizing it. Judah is likely the primary author, making him second most likely author for the previous chapter (but I think Joseph clearly write most or all of the final sections of Genesis).

This is one of the few times that we will examine the life of Judah and it isn't a pretty sight. He even failed when it came to the morality of his day, let alone with true morality. For the past couple chapters, we have seen failure after failure in the lives of the sons of Jacob. One can lay fault with Jacob and his late spiritual growth spurt and with his favoritism; but he is spiritually grown and his sons are men now—responsible for their own behavior.

You may ask, *why is any of this important?* Judah will be the line of Christ. In fact, in this very chapter, we will see exactly how his line is the line of the Messiah—and it will be some unusual twists and turns.

When comparing this to the chapter which follows, you have two people in this chapter who do not appear to be adjusting to the plan of God: Joseph and Tamar; and in the next chapter, we study the man most adjusted to the justice of God—Joseph. In both cases, in this and the next chapters, God's will is clearly the issue, and God's will is done, despite Judah's hard-heartedness in this chapter, and in synch with Joseph's divine viewpoint thinking in the next chapter. God's will is moving forward in both chapters, no matter who is onboard and who is not.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

## Judah's Mistress and Their Children

**It came about at that time that Judah departed [lit., went down] from his brothers and visited [lit., turned aside to] a certain man, an Adullamite, whose name [was] Hirah. [Gen. 38:1]**

This was not just some stranger or someone that Judah had met on this trip—a certain man indicates that Judah specifically went for the purpose of seeing this man. This was likely a private business venture wherein they both had a flock of sheep together that one of them funded and the other provided the beginnings for the flock. This

---

<sup>115</sup> I think that this information was actually recorded in the minds of Joseph's children, who passed it down to their children. I believe that the book of Genesis, for all intents and purposes, was memorized in its entirety by the Jews while in Egypt.



is our first encounter with an Adullamite; they have not been mentioned in any previous genealogy. From this family will come a city Adullam mentioned later in Joshua (Josh. 12:15 15:35 and several other places in the Bible). When this city came to be and its relation to Hirah is unknown. It seems to be spoken of here as already being in existence.

In this chapter we have a repeated figure of speech called a *pleonasm* [pronounced *PLE-o-nasm*] (or redundancy), which is a phrase whose lack would not seem to affect the meaning or the grammatical completeness of the sentence. It is the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which is typically translated *and it came to pass*. This occurs six times in this chapter (vv. 1, 7, 24, 27, 28 and 29) as opposed to but once in the previous chapter (v. 23), whereas there were ample opportunities to use that phrase in the previous sentence and ample reasons to leave it out in this chapter. What is the difference? It is a difference of style. Joseph will have the same style in his writings and it will be a phrase, although used sparingly prior to this chapter, will be found quite often after this. This is a way of saying that *time has passed*, but not a great deal of time (as in Gen. 38:12). This is also a possible indication that authorship changed between chapters 37 and 38 (if Joseph was the ultimate author/editor, which I believe he was, then he may have retained some of the idiosyncracies of his source material).

The Holy Spirit chooses each and every word, but that each and every word expresses the emotions, the thoughts and the vocabulary of the human author. This means that the use of this word is not superfluous, but the way the human and the divine author express emphasis. For almost 2000 years, this particular phrase would endure through many authors. To sum up, we find this phrased used for:

1. Emphasis
2. An expression which tells us time has passed
3. Possibly an indication of a different author or a different set of circumstances.

**There Judah saw a daughter of a Canaanite whose name [was] Shua and he took her and went in to her.** [Gen. 38:2]

The translations vary here somewhat—some say that Jacob took this woman and some say that he married her. The Hebrew word is *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] and it is in the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, 3<sup>rd</sup> feminine singular suffix. The simple meaning is *to take* but it is used in a variety of ways. This word is used of Abimelech who had *taken* Abraham's wife due to his lie (Gen. 20:3) and of the servant of Abraham *taking* a woman for Isaac (Gen. 24:4). In conjunction with the word *îshshâh* (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced *eesh-SHAW*], it does mean *to take to wife* or *to take a woman to wife* (e.g., Gen. 11:29 25:20 28:1, 6) and it is used perhaps a thousand times throughout the Old Testament. Here, we do not have the *lshshah*; and we will have reason to believe later that she is not his right woman (first a foremost is, she is a Canaanite woman who name is never given).

The last verb is the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, 3<sup>rd</sup> feminine singular suffix of *bôw'* (אוּב) [pronounced *boh*] and it means *to come, to go, to enter* and is used several thousand times in the OT with a variety of applications. In conjunction with women, it is a Hebrew euphemism for having sex. The scenario appears to be that Judah took her to live with her. It is very possible that Judah's family disapproved of him marrying a Canaanite woman.

It appears that Judah found her ravishing and could not live without her because she excited him—and therefore took her (apparently as a wife, but not where his family appears to be involved). Was Judah overcome with lust and desire? Possibly, but we are reading into the text to take that view. In any case, our modern lifestyle is much less modern than its proponents would have you to believe.

**So she conceived a bore a son and he called his name Er; and she conceived again and bore a son and she called his name Onan; and yet again, she bore a son and she called his name Shelah. He was in Chezib when she bore him.** [Gen. 38:3–5]

ʿĒr (רַע) [pronounced *gair*] and it is the Qal participle of רָוַר (רוע) [pronounced *goor*] which means *to see*, but it has the connotation of opening one's eyes or just waking up. Judah names him. Having a son was quite an eye-opener for him. How Judah views his wife/woman is not clear; but having this first child opened his eyes.

Immediately they have another child, and they have a *modern* relationship where she named the next child ʾŌwnân (אונן) [pronounced *oh-NAWN*] and it means *vigorous, having ability and power, successful*. By the second child in an affair such as this, the man is beginning to become a bit weary of the woman and is ready to go on business trips and come back a little less often. What the woman has to offer is children for him so she emphasizes that this child is strong, healthy and vigorous with great potential—this should capture his attention and imagination. However, this didn't work out because Judah appears to be going away more often. Several years passed before they had a third child. The two Hebrew words which precede this third son have to do with persistence and continuation along with the word *to add*. This indicates that they continued at their living together and persisted at having a family, even though they had sex less and less often and Judah was going on more and more business trips to tend to his investments out of town. Judah wasn't far away; this town was southwest of Adullah in the lowlands of Judah.

I may want to go back and redo this and add some additional sources.

### The Meaning of Chezib

Chezib means *disappointment, deception*, which is a pretty odd thing to name your son (who named him?). K<sup>e</sup>zîyb (כִּזִּיב) [pronounced *keh-z-EEB*] is only found in this passage, although it is possible that it is related to Achezib (or ʾAk<sup>e</sup>zîyb) (אֲחִזִּיב) [pronounced *ak-ZEEB*] (found in Joshua 15:44 and Micah 1:14) if not the same place, but probably not the same place as the Achezib up in Asher (in Joshua 19:29 and Judges 1:31). The verb which this word is related to is kâzab (כָּזַב) [pronounced *kaw-ZAB*], which means *to lie, to deceive*; and the related noun is kâzâb (כִּזְב) [pronounced *kaw-ZAWB*] which means *a lie or a falsehood*.

It is a tough call here. It is very tempting to say that the noun and the verb proceeded from the name of the town in this case, because the first time that we have any word related to these words is in Job 6:28 24:25 34:6 41:9 other than that, all the related words occur but one time in the Law (Num. 23:19 wherein it reads *God is not a man that he should lie*). This should all be quite fascinating to the etymologist who would have to decide which came first, the chicken or the egg? In this case, which came first, the town or the meaning of the name? This could very well be a possible means of identifying the elusive date of Job (with other pertinent philological evidence). If Judah's reputation and this town were interrelated and he continually told his wife that he had to go to Chezib on business, it couldn't take but a few years for the name to become synonymous with lying and deception. This would place the book of Job perhaps 50–300 years later, but definitely before the Law and the exodus (as neither are mentioned in the book of Job). If Job predates this time period to even soon after the flood, we have the problem where these words are used several times in the book of Job yet are barely found within the realm of Moses' vocabulary (one use).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Some of the comments I wrote in my original examination of Genesis are preserved below.

### Memories from 1994/2016

From 1994: One of the reasons that we study almost each and every word in the Bible is that they were placed there by God for a variety of reasons. If we just assume it is just the name of some town somewhere with no other relation to the rest of Scripture, then we miss some of the investigative work available to us. I unfortunately did not begin serious personal study until I got my first computer during the summer of 1994. I had just been given the ax by a wonderful woman whom I thought that I was going to marry. This, combined with a terrible summer in real estate, allowed me to begin my personal studies in God's Word. At the age of 44, now a little over a year later where my stamina at the keyboard has improved somewhat, I cannot imagine doing

## Memories from 1994/2016

what I would like to do—that is, exegete every book in the Bible as well as I have been able to exegete this particular book of Genesis. There are several revisions which I need to make and material which I have which I have not consulted yet, but in all this study, it has caused me to realize how inexhaustible are the riches of the Word of God. I have been given training in two fields prior to this time which have been incredibly beneficial to me: I spent nearly 25 years under the ministry of R.B. Thieme, whose knowledge of the languages and the Scriptures were almost unparalleled in his day; and I spent almost 20 years teaching Geometry, a marvelous form of logic, something which many Biblical expositors (and their know-it-all critics from the other side of the pulpit) are totally lacking in. Although I taught over 1000 how to think in a logical, deductive manner, this training also rubbed off on me, which I have found immeasurably valuable in my study of God's Word.

I am looking back at this in the year 2016 when I have just turned 66 years old. I had no idea how much I would be able to study and write over these past 22 years. It is amazing how God works in our lives. There are so many things which happened all at once, all at the right time, and all which moved me into the direction of studying the Old Testament and then writing about it. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Judah's wife named the last couple children as she was a liberated woman for the second child and possibly a woman who was alone for the third child. Shelah, or Shêlâh (שֶׁלָה) [pronounced *shay-LAW*] is a very unusual name for a young man. The alleged meanings for him include *to draw out*, *to extract* (shâlâh—שָׁלַח); *to be quiet*, *to be at ease* and, quite possibly, *to be prosperous* (shâlâh or shâlêz). His wife quite obviously had a way with words and she named the child drawn out of her quiet and prosperous.

**And Judah took a wife for Er, his first-born, and he name was Tamar.** [Gen. 38:6]

I personally believe that almost everyone who has a right man or right woman is introduced to that person at least once in their lives. They may not be able to do anything about it because they are in the midst of an affair with another person; they might be married to this right person and ruin it with an affair with another; they are usually married to the wrong person out of lust and lack of self-control; or they meet both their right person and they meet someone a bit flashier and they gravitate toward the flash. Judah should have waited. He should not have married a Canaanite woman. There was enough history in the family of Abraham to warn him against doing that.

It is likely that the person that he met here was his right woman. Please understand what he did; he went out and saw a woman who was quite attractive and quite appealing and he walked up to her and said, how would you like the marry my son? He did not approach her for himself. She accepted. Whatever it was that he said, it appealed to her and she accepted.

In any case, it seemed a bad idea to Judah to just let his first son marry whatever woman he fancied. My guess is, Judah put a lot of careful thought into this woman, more than he did when he took up with the Canaanite woman. We know Tamar by name; we do not know the Canaanite woman by name.

**But it came to pass Er, Judah's firstborn, was decadent in the sight of Yahweh and Yahweh killed him.** [Gen. 38:7]

The word for evil is ra' (עַר) [pronounced *rahg'*] a word causing considerable disagreement. BDB presents it as both a noun and an adjective with entirely different (and a great contrariety of opinions as to its) uses. It is the same as the perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of the corresponding verb, also causing confusion and disagreement. Here, when used with the Hebrew equivalent of the absolute status quo verb *to be*—hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], it is clearly an adjective used as a predicate nominative. *Wicked* sounds somewhat outdated, but then it

is hard to find a suitable synonym which does not sound outdated in an era of positive re-enforcement, relative morality and non-judgmental commentary. *Depraved, morally bankrupt, morally depraved, decadent* are all reasonable synonyms which could be used. This means that very likely Er embraced the lack of morality in his day found in that area in which they lived and God killed him because of it. He was so evil, that God did not want his seed to be perpetuated and took his life.

So Er and Tamar were promised to be married—it is not clear if they actually married (I would think that they did); but they had no children. In that era, the woman not only married the husband, but she married into his family. Her new husband—and, if necessary, her new family—took responsibility for her. The responsibility shifted from her father to the new husband and the new family.

During that day when the population was small and there was a great deal of expansion which God wanted to see take place, it was the custom that if a brother died without children, that his brother should either marry and impregnate his brother's wife. Often the case would be, God would provide a person with their right woman that their evil brother snagged yet did not have children by. It was also difficult for a woman during those times who was once married to become remarried. This allowed her to remove the stigma of a previous marriage and allowed her to be married again. Many of the characteristics which attracted her to one man were to be found in that man's brother. Er's brother, did not want to be tied down to this woman, although there was nothing wrong with her. The motive was likely greed (although, Onan would have been quite young—a teenager).

**Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up children on behalf of your brother." But Onan knew that the children would not be his, so it was when he went in to his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground, so that he would not give children to his brother. [Gen. 38:8–9]**

Tamar was not unattractive; Onan had no trouble having sex with her, but he chose not to father a child on behalf of his brother. For some reason, which I do not entirely fathom, Onan does not want to father children who would be on behalf of his late brother. Victor Matthews sheds some light on this in his *Manners and Customs in the Bible*. The children born to this marriage would be the legal heirs of Er and not of Onan. Er, being the first-born, and Judah being quite the businessman, meant that Er's progeny would receive a lion's share of the inheritance. If a brother did not come along and impregnate Tamar, then the next in line for the lion's share of the inheritance would be Onan. So Onan did not impregnate Tamar out of selfishness. No heirs of Er means more money for him at Judah's death. He has no problems with having sex with Tamar, but he will not take the responsibility which comes with it. It is quite likely that Onana could have refused and been off the hook; but the fact that he slept with his brother's wife, but then intentionally did not impregnate her, was a selfish act of degeneracy. It would be difficult for her to find a husband or to have children (a burning need for many women), she will not have children next in line for Er's inheritance, and Onan only made things worse.

For Tamar, she is looking for two things—some security and a family. One of the very interesting political differences between men and women is, many woman—particularly those who see themselves as *liberated from men*—will turn around and vote for whatever politician promises to step into the role of the husband/provider. They think they are liberated because they do not depend upon a husband—but then, vote in such a way for the government to take care of them, just in case things go bad. It is a natural instinct—quite obviously, this is not true of all women—but a preponderance of younger, single women (particularly single mothers) will vote Democrat, because the Democrat party promises that the federal government will take care of them (in fact, during one of President Obama's elections, his campaign posted *the Life of Julia*, an interactive advertisement which showed how Julia, a woman without a husband, was taken care of by the government at every step of the way in her life. Many conservatives laughed at this and even mocked it (although you can no longer find *the Life of Julia* online, you can find parodies of it), but that is because most conservatives did not understand why this appealed to women. Women, even in today's modern culture, still have the innate need for someone to protect them, for someone to look out for their needs. If they have rejected the man as the provider/protector, then many (and the numbers prove this) then vote for a government which promises to do the same thing.

Now, what about women who vote Republican and promote conservative values? Any person who adheres to the laws of divine establishment is far more likely to vote conservative, regardless of gender. Furthermore, married women already have a provider/protector, and so, they do not need another one (government). Therefore, married women and women who believe in the laws of divine establishment will more likely vote for conservatives.

One of the things which bothered me in the Old Testament was the divine law that if a Jew dies childless, that his brother should marry his widowed wife (Deut. 24:5–6). However, we have seen that there was a stigma attached to having been married before; particularly to having had relations with another man before. This allowed the woman to have children, to have a husband, and not have this stigma. The brother would have, as mentioned, many of the characteristics that originally drew her to her first husband, since they are siblings. Furthermore, the brothers would likely have similar taste in women, so that this woman would not be displeasing to her second husband.

Part of what bothered me is that free will was removed when choosing a mate; however, I belong to a generation for which free will was foremost in the selection of a marriage partner and we have a 50% batting average when it comes to marriages lasting.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, we are dealing with a particular time period with a particular population. We are no longer under the law and it is best not to over-think these situations (as did the Pharisees in Matt. 22:24). Our application to today? If a man does die childless, then his brother should at least carefully examine this widow and they should determine if they should marry. With the choices made today, many men and women could do a lot worse.

Interestingly enough, Judah, who made a free will choice to marry a Canaanite woman, believed it would be better if he chose Er's wife for him.

**This [lit., and] that he did was displeasing in the sight of Yahweh and He executed him also.**  
[Gen. 38:10]

One of the themes of the Old Testament was the fear of the Lord. This was fear intermingled with respect. A person who is strong and tough and could pound anyone that he fought (even though he might not fight) is both feared and respected; feared, because you cannot fight him without getting the snot beat out of you, but respected because he did not go out looking for a fight. God the Father and God the Son commanded that same fear/respect from the Old Testament saints (and strictly fear from some). God does not arbitrarily execute a person nor does He arbitrarily wipe out a city, a nation, or a group of people. His wrath is tempered with perfect justice and perfect judgment. We may not fully understand why God acts the way that He does in every case; however, at some point we will; and then we will know even as we are known. Tamar is in the line of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whatever reason, her genes were specifically chosen by God to be in our Lord's line. Onan had the opportunity to forever be remembered as having been in the line of the humanity of the Savior of the Universe and he chose not to be. We do not know how much he specifically understood—I don't believe that any of the principals involved understood that this would be the line of the Messiah. Similarly, we do not know how much unbelievers understand when they reject God's word. However, God in His infinite wisdom and perfection chose to take Onan out of the world, just as He did Er. Onan died the sin unto death.

**Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain as a widow in your father's house until Shelah, my son, grows up"; for he feared that he would die like his brothers. So Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.** [Gen. 38:11]

Judah does not know enough about Jesus Christ to exactly comprehend what has happened. His first two sons have died. He knows that it is right for his youngest son to marry this woman and bring up children by her, but he doesn't want him to die. He's in a quandary here so he sends her away to her father's home and leaves that option open for this son to marry her while he ponders the situation. In the meanwhile, Judah does not want to assume the financial responsibility for this woman that he has brought into his home, so he sends her back to her family. So there is no misunderstanding, Judah, when he chose Tamar to become his daughter-in-law, was

---

<sup>116</sup> Some, like Michael Medved, claim that this percentage is exaggerated.

pledging the support and protection of his family towards her. You do not do that, and then send the girl back to her father's home.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

## Judah and His Daughter-in-law Tamar

**Now considerable time passed [lit., *the days multiplied*] and Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheep shearers, he and Hirah, his friend, the Adullamite. [Gen. 38:12]**

Judah retained this business relationship and this partnership with Hirah throughout these years. They have continued their business not just in the shepherding business, but they have branched out into sheepshearing and who knows what else. We do not know exactly how much time has passed, but it has been at least a year or so at least since Judah sent Tamar packing back to her father's. Judah's youngest sons is now old enough to be married (he would be a young teenager at this time). He was not old enough before when Tamar's husband died).

Note that Judah's brothers are not in the picture here, indicating that this is Judah's private life, apart from his family, making him the most like candidate to author this portion of Scripture. I think what happened was, Judah told this story to Joseph, and Joseph included it in his own narrative, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly enough, we follow the *line* of Judah much more carefully than we follow the line of Joseph, despite the fact that Joseph is, by almost any standard, a better person than Judah.

**And when it was told to Tamar, saying "See, your father-in-law is going up to Timna to shear his sheep," she put off her widow's garments from upon her and put on a veil, wrapping herself up and sat at the entrance to Enaim [lit., *Two Fountains*], which is on the road to Timnah, for she observed that Shelah was grown up and she had not been given to him in marriage. [Gen. 38:13–14]**

Tamar had been wearing these widow's clothes for some time, perhaps months or even a year or two, remaining unmarried according to Judah's word. However, as time passed, she realized that she was not going to marry his third son. She has remained in mourning for years according to Judah's word, and he has not contacted her, nor has his son. It was not right to make her wait like that. What she plans to do is not right either. There are great sections of Scripture during which no one does anything right. This should not be a concern to the reader. In historical documents, it is much more often the case when the writer embellishes the honor and integrity of the protagonist of any given section, particularly if that portion is autobiographical. Here is where the Bible is different from all other documents. The writers of Scripture maintain their literary skills (or lack thereof), their vocabulary, their thoughts, but, most importantly, what they write and record is objective, recording everything that they have done which is important to us in all of its negative detail. I personally would not want to have family members and friends read a totally objective and accurate biography about me—I would be too embarrassed to face anyone afterwards. Had many of these things been about me, I don't know that I would have written them down. Most of what we know about Judah so far is negative. The rest of this chapter will not change that.

This verse also gives us a little peek at the practices of the day. During that time in that area, most women went about their daily business unveiled. However, those who hailed from the Mesopotamian area (including those influenced by their culture) wore veils occasionally as an act of modesty (Gen. 38:14). Fashion and those things which mark a person vary from area to area, from time to time, then as they do now.

**When Judah saw her, he thought her to be soliciting [as a prostitute]<sup>117</sup>, for she had covered her face. So he went over to her at the road side and he said, "Please come now; let me come in to**

<sup>117</sup> Since this is in the Qal participle, a good *one-word* translation would be *street-walker*

**you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. Then she said, "What will you give me that you may come in to me?"** [Gen. 38:15–16]

In case you are concerned about the recognition factor, Tamar is (1) wearing a veil and (2) a lot of time has passed since Judah and she have seen one another (see v. 12). My guess is that anywhere from 3 to 15 years have transpired since they have seen one another. Since they were not intimate before, it is not difficult to imagine that Judah did not recognize her under these circumstances.

There are several words which are used in this a later verses which are translated *harlot, harlotry, temple prostitute,*, etc. I'll provide you with a glossary below:

Hebrew Glossary for <i>Prostitute</i> and other Nasty Words			
zânâh (זָנָה) [pronounced zaw-NAW]	Strong's #2181 BDB #275	Verb: from a root word meaning to be highly fed; it actually means: to be a whore, to commit adultery, usually used of the woman, less often used for committing fornication, rarely of rape, often used of Israel for spiritual adultery	Gen. 38: 15 (prtc), 24
			Gen. 34:31 Ex. 34:15 Judges 8:33 19:2 Josh. 6:17 Jer. 3:1
z°nûwthîym (זְנוּתִיִּם) [pronounced zahn-oo- THEEM]	Strong's #2183 BDB #276	Plural abstract intensive substantive: <i>fornications, acts of adultery, acts of prostitution; spiritual adulteries</i>	Gen. 38:24
			2Kings 9:22 Ezek. 23:11 Hos. 1:2
z°nûwth (זְנוּת) [pronounced zahn-OOTH]	Strong's #2184 BDB #276	Substantive: also means adultery, but primarily figuratively for <i>idolatry</i> . Its meanings are given as, <i>adultery, infidelity; idolatry; fornication, harlotry.</i>	not in this passage
			Num. 14:33 Jer. 3:2, 9 Hos. 4:11 6:10
qâdêsh (קִדְּשׁ) [pronounced kaw-DAYSH]	Strong's #6945 BDB #873	Substantive: this is the word which means temple prostitute and this is the female form	Gen. 38:21, 22
			Deut. 23:17 Hos. 4:14

There are many more such words in the Hebrew.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

One of the areas where we have not become quite as modern as these heathen is that sex was a part of their religious ceremonies. Some women who gave themselves to the *church* were not celibate nuns, but women who fornicated to fill the church's coffers; women who fornicated as part of the worship service; women who gave themselves to the heathen priests as a kind of dedication to God. This was probably not Judah's first time with a whore; he knew what they were and he had no problem with unconditional sex. By the use of the word for *soliciting*, we do not know whether Judah perceived her as a temple prostitute or not; we do not have a verb to go with *qadeshah* as we do with *zanuwn*. However, by the word *qadreshah* used in vv. 21 & 22. It is unclear whether Judah saw her as a temple prostitute or just as a prostitute. I would guess the latter, based upon the words which he uses himself.

**He answered, "I will send a kid from the flock [lit., a kid of goats]" and she said, "Will you give [me] a pledge until you send it?"** [Gen. 38:17]

Tamar was a bright young lady; she was every bit as clever and devious as her father-in-law. She would take the things which would identify Judah as the father of her child-to-be. As far as he is concerned, he is giving these things to her temporarily until he delivers the kid from the flock; besides, he is not thinking with his head right now.

**He asked, "What pledge will I give you?" She replied, "Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her and she conceived by him.**  
[Gen. 38:18]

Prostitutes apparently had some sort of an honor system. These things were worthless to the prostitute, but invaluable to Judah. The cylinder seal which she kept was used to inscribe his name on clay tablets and personal property and various legal documents. This seal is what would bind him legally in a business deal. We have a similar situation today where certain legal documents must be notarized to show that the person signing the documents was really the person who he claimed to be.

Judah was not worried that he would lose these items of value. They were of value to him; and they were not of value to the prostitute.

**Then she arose and went away and taking off her veil from upon her, she put on the garments of her widow-hood.** [Gen. 38:19]

This woman is bright. She tires Judah out, he falls asleep, and when she leaves, she does not put back on her prostitute disguise (which only Judah saw), but put on her clothing which indicated that she was in mourning for her late husband. No one would ever make a connection to the woman in mourning and to the prostitute (had they seen her). This is almost like a chess game of relative righteousness.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

## The Search for the Temple Prostitute

**When Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he could not find her. And he asked the men of the place, saying, "Where is the [temple] prostitute who was at Enaim by the road side, and they said, "There has been no [temple] prostitute here." [Gen. 38:20–21]**

A day or so has passed. Judah has returned home, picked out a kid, and sends it back with Hirah on his trip back home. With most prostitutes, religious or otherwise, they worked in specific areas and most of the town knows who they are. It should not be difficult to locate this particular one. However, nobody remembers seeing her; no one knows of a regular prostitute who fits her description, and that leaves Hirah wandering about with this kid to give away. Had he asked the right people the right questions, they might have remembered seeing a mourning widow leave town.

**So he returned to Judah and said, "I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, 'There has not been a [temple] prostitute here.'" [Gen. 38:22]**

Judah never expected anything like this to happen. What they did was routine six. He was bored, he found a woman who excited him, his wife had passed away, and he thought he would have a little fun. It has never occurred to him throughout this entire chapter than any of what he did was wrong. His friend did not seem to think so. In fact, he was going to deliver the calf for Judah.

Can you imagine, this, his best friend of his entire life, may spend eternity in the lake of fire while Judah spends eternity in heaven because Judah had a weak testimony for his best friend—in fact, he had no testimony for his best friend. Judah just went along with the crowd, with the mores of his day and never gave much thought to the God of his father.



**And Judah replied, "Let her keep the things as her own so that we will not become contemptible. You see, I did send this kid and you could not find her." [Gen. 38:23]**

What Judah is not going to do is to continue to send Hirah with the kid, nor is he going to go there himself. Judah would be embarrassed to continually ask around about a prostitute. Even though these are the mores of that time, he still is embarrassed about it. He still realizes that going from house to house in that area searching for a prostitute will make him contemptible to the populace there.

In our day and age, we have things on TV which 20 years ago would have constituted an R-rated film.<sup>118</sup> The first X-rated film, *The Midnight Cowboy*, can now be played on television uncut and no one thinks anything of it. We have a pornography industry unparalleled in past times and topless bars for men and for women. However, if you let a politician or a preacher have an affair, some people act as if the world is going to end and are amazed that he could do such a thing. It is a double-standard that has been with us since time immemorial. Judah justifies his position. He made an effort to have this woman found and to take her the kid; if she does not want it, then so be it. He is not going to comb the countryside for this woman.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

### Tamar's Pregnancy and Delivery

**And it came to pass about three months later that it was told to Judah, saying, "Tamar has committed adultery—your daughter-in-law—and, moreover, see that she is with child by her adulterous actions." And Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned." [Gen. 38:24]**

Notice this bit of self-righteousness. Judah is about to solve his small problem of having a daughter-in-law who expects to marry his last son. We do not know how his son feels about this but likely Judah is holding back, thinking that perhaps, somehow, this woman is cursed, and is causing her husbands—his sons—to die because of this curse. He is in the clear; he told this woman to wait. Now, no matter what, it is expected that she should wait.

In that era, a woman with a child without a husband, without any word to Judah or to his son, is punishable by death and Judah expects to exact this punishment, even though Judah had no intention of allowing her to marry his son. Judah calls for the execution of this woman who is possibly his right woman, designed by God for him in eternity past; a woman God chose to be in the line of our Lord. This is how mixed up we can become under sin and scar tissue of the soul.

It is not clear as to where she would be taken to be burned and how long the legal process would take. What some scholars believe is that there was no formal legal process and that the patriarch of the family lays down the law and executes justice (along with his other duties of arranging marriages and handling all business and financial transactions). We have another example of this authority in Gen. 16 when Sarai is throwing a fit about Hagar, (Little Egypt, as R. B. Thieme, Jr. called her) whom Abram impregnated upon her suggestion. It was Abraham's choice to turn the judgement of Hagar over to Sarai. He had the legal ability to do this; and it got Sarai and her bitching out of his hair concerning that matter.

**As she was being brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please, I ask you, the signet, the cord and the staff—whose [are] these?" [Gen. 38:25]**

Tamar got a stay of execution until these items were identified. She sent these things into his tent for his inspection. Signet, cord and staff all have definite articles in the Hebrew, indicating a reference to specific items

<sup>118</sup> I wrote this in 1994; in looking it over, an early "X" rated film can be played on television today unedited.

belonging to a specific person; however, use of the definite article here would sound stilted in the English unless the Hebrew word *ordered* was changed.

**The Judah acknowledged [these items] and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to Shelah, my son." And he did not have sexual relations with [lit., *know*] her again.** [Gen. 38:26]

This is relative righteousness; it is possible that Judah could have been burned to death also for this crime of having relations with a woman who was promised to another man; however, he was deceived and he was the one who had done the promising but did not follow through.

**And it came to pass when the time of her delivery arrived, and it was [lit., *behold*] that she had twins in her womb. And it came to pass that when she was in labor, one put out a hand and the midwife took a bound his band with a scarlet thread, saying, "This one came out first."** [Gen. 38:27–28]

The first-born was next in line to receive all that came from his father's estate, even in the situation of twins. The midwife identified the child with a scarlet thread.

**But it came to pass [or, *and it was*] as he drew back his hand, they saw [behold] his brother emerge, and she said, "What have you [done] bursting through, [making] for yourself—a breach?" Therefore, his name was called Perez. Afterward, his brother with the scarlet thread around his hand came out and his name was called Zerah.** [Gen. 38:29–30]

Gen. 38:29b is a mess in most translations when it comes to understanding what it says. NASB: *...behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez.* The ever-literal *The Emphasized Bible* reads: *...lo! his brother had come. And she said, "Wherefore hast thou made for thyself a breach? The Amplified Bible: ...his brother was born first. And she said, What a breaking forth you have made for yourself! Therefore his name was called Perez [breaking forth].* As you can see, this is not easy to unravel, our chief problem being this *breach* stuff. What the hell are they talking about? What is this breach stuff? I think that I half-understand what a breach birth is, but I wouldn't want to jump into giving anyone a definition feet first for fear of embarrassing myself.

The word in question is used twice in the Hebrew, once as a verb and the second time as a noun. The verb is the Qal perfect, 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular of *pârats* (פָּרַץ) [pronounced *paw-RATS*] and it means *to break out, to burst forth*, and *breach* is used in a similar fashion to breaching the walls of a castle. The kid was so feisty that he practically jumped out of the womb, even though his *older* brother's hand came out first. What follows is the preposition *‘al* (עַל) [pronounced *‘ah/*] and it can mean *forth, out of, upon, against* often with a downward movement implied. The noun that follows is the masculine singular with a 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular suffix of the word *perets* (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced *PEH-rets*] and it means *a breach, a gap, a hole*. Strong's #6556 BDB #829.

Perez, as you have no doubt surmised, is the word *perets* (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced *PEH-rets*] and it means *a breach, a gap, a hole*. The kid was a go-getter. We know very little about Perez, but more was known about his family in the days of Ruth. In a blessing (or, if this helps to understand, *in a toast*) to Boaz and Ruth, the grandparents of David, the elders of Israel and the court said, "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, thorough the offspring which the Lord shall give you by this young woman." (Ruth 4:12) We find that our Lord is descended from through Tamar through Perez in Ruth 4:18 and Matt. 1:3, so even though we as Christians may think these lines of names particularly boring and without spiritual impact, behind every name there was a person's life from whose example we can often profit.

His brother, the more logy of the pair, Zerah, is found in the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1:3 also), even though he is not a progenitor of our Lord's humanity. In fact, he is mentioned by name in this context whereas the other sons of Israel who make up the twelve tribes of Israel are called mere the brothers of Judah in this same genealogy. His name means *shining, dawning, rising*. His progeny will become a sub-tribe of the tribe of Judah (Num. 26:20)

and he, of course, is not the same Zerah as we have seen in Gen. 36, who was descended from both Ishmael and Esau.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

Gen. 38 is one of the more unusual narratives in Scripture. Therefore, we should ask, *why is it here?*

### Summing up the Reasons for Genesis 38

1. We find a further contrast between the character of Joseph and his brothers
2. We see the negative affect upon the children of Israel living in the land of Canaan under the influence of the Canaanites
3. This gives us a hint of the degeneracy prevalent within the tribe of the Canaanites so that we can better understand God's mandate that they be executed in the later books of Moses
4. This gives us a bit more insight on the custom, divinely authorized, of raising up children on behalf of a husband who has died prematurely and childless
5. Whereas we thought that we lived in a modern world, what with many couples living together without the benefit of marriage, we have Judah indulging in the same activity nearly 4000 years prior to our day
6. We see that the double-standard got an early start in human history
7. Finally, we had a chance to see three of the progenitors of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ

God did not design us to go to the Bible and read for ourselves to dig all of this information out for ourselves. I cannot imagine back in the early years as a Christian every reading this chapter and getting 1% of what it there. Even today, after a great deal of training, I still needed a jump start from the wonderful Christian, the late J. Vernon McGee. God gave us pastor-teachers to guide us in the Word and if we have the positive volition—if we desire to know God's truth—it will be revealed to us.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

**Genesis 39** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 39

### Genesis 39:1–23

This is one of the easier narratives to organize:

Vv. 1–6	<a href="#">Joseph and Potiphar</a>
Vv. 7–18	<a href="#">Joseph and Potiphar's wife</a>
Vv. 19–23	<a href="#">Joseph and the Warden of the prison</a>
Introduction	<a href="#">A Brief Summary of Genesis</a>
Introduction	<a href="#">Links to the JEPD Theory (also known as Documentary Hypothesis)</a>
Introduction	<a href="#">The Original Human Authors of Genesis</a>
Introduction	<a href="#">Lessons to be Learned from Joseph</a>
v. 9	<a href="#">Joseph Reasoning with Potiphar's Wife</a>
v. 13	<a href="#">The Word "Hebrew"</a>

**Introduction:** This chapter marks the beginning of the last portion of Genesis. To summarize Genesis:

A Brief Summary of Genesis	
Chapters	Subject Matter
Gen. 1–2	Creation
Gen. 3–5	The Fall and the Line of Adam
Gen. 6–10	Noah and the Flood
Gen. 11	The Tower of Babel
Gen. 12–23	Abraham
Gen. 24–26	Isaac
Gen. 27–35	Jacob
Gen. 36	Esau
Gen. 37	The Sons of Jacob
Gen. 38	Judah
Gen. 39–50	Joseph

This also marks the final author of Genesis, namely Joseph. I understand the strong position which some have taken with respect to the authorship of Genesis and dropping it firmly in the lap of Moses. From some of the things which have been said, certainly someone, probably Moses, wrote the *final draft* of Genesis, but more as an editor

than as an original author (and I am not referring to an editor, per se, but some bits of information were added here or there—possibly from several people). The strong desire to make Moses the author of Genesis may be a reaction to the those who split Genesis into several disjoint sections written by authors perhaps 1000-3000 years after the events of Genesis, and distinguished simply by their prominent use of God's name. This view of authorship has been refuted many times in the past. However, I think this should be summarized for those who are unaware that such a driving force exists. **See The Doctrine of Documentary Hypothesis:**

In case you are unfamiliar with this overall interpretation of Old Testament Scripture.

### Links to the JEPD Theory (also known as Documentary Hypothesis)

Description	Link
Basic one page description	<a href="http://imp.lss.wisc.edu/~rltroxel/Intro/hypoth.html">http://imp.lss.wisc.edu/~rltroxel/Intro/hypoth.html</a>
My coverage of this topic	Documentary Hypothesis ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> )
More detailed approach; author favors this theory	<a href="http://www.cs.umd.edu/~mvz/bible/doc-hyp.pdf">http://www.cs.umd.edu/~mvz/bible/doc-hyp.pdf</a>
A detailed analysis; seems to be a fair assessment	<a href="http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/09/24/the-documentary-hypothesis.aspx">http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/09/24/the-documentary-hypothesis.aspx</a>
What it is; and a strong criticism of this theory	<a href="http://www.gotquestions.org/documentary-hypothesis.html">http://www.gotquestions.org/documentary-hypothesis.html</a>
Debunking the Documentary Hypothesis	<a href="http://creation.com/debunking-the-documentary-hypothesis">http://creation.com/debunking-the-documentary-hypothesis</a>
A Critical Assessment of the Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis	<a href="http://vintage.aomin.org/JEDP.html">http://vintage.aomin.org/JEDP.html</a>

Essentially, the JEPD theory does not believe that the authors of Scripture are who they had traditionally been believed to be; that much of the Old Testament is fabricated; and that the supernatural is a result of imaginative authors and those who wrote long after these books were assume to have been written. Essentially, this is a theory which rejected the orthodox understanding of the inspiration of Scriptures. However, it is found on many seminary campuses and often presented as the intellectual approach to the Word of God.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

I believe that most of Genesis was written by a series of authors whose stories are found within Genesis. For the greater portion of Genesis, most of this was an almost seamless narrative, picked up every few chapters by a new writer of Scripture. It is not until the end of this book when the sources and the writing seem more disjoint, as though they may have come from different areas and were woven together perhaps (but not necessarily) by an editor. My personal opinion of authorship is below:

The Original Human Authors of Genesis	
Portion of Genesis	Original Author
Gen. 1–4	Adam
Gen. 5–9	Noah (except for the last couple verses)
Gen. 10–23	Abraham (much of Gen. 10 & 11 came from historic and genealogical records)

Gen. 24–26	Isaac
Gen. 27–35	Jacob
Gen. 36	Esau, or from records provided by Esau
Gen. 37	Joseph, Reuben or possibly Judah
Gen. 38	Judah or Joseph
Gen. 39–50	Joseph (except for the final couple verses)

These final 3 sections were probably written by Joseph, based upon his own experiences and based upon discussions that he had with his brothers and father.

With chapter 39, we travel with Joseph into Egypt and follow his highly unusual life and rise to political power in that country. He is the only son of Jacob who indicates that he received any real spiritual training (the others may or may not have received it; but they did not exhibit any spiritual growth for decades<sup>119</sup>).

Because of his knowledge of things spiritual, God expects more of Joseph and we will see times at which God's treatment of Joseph seems exceedingly tough.

### Lessons to be Learned from Joseph

1. To whom much is given, much is expected
2. In order for Joseph to assume great power in Egypt, his character was to be impeccable and his abilities without parallel
3. The sons of Jacob must be removed from the degeneracy of the land of Canaan because it had a detrimental affect upon their spiritual lives
4. God chose for the sons of Jacob to live in blessing and prosperity for the last portion of their lives; He had to send Joseph to Egypt first to prepare the way
5. Joseph's training and discipline under God was absolutely necessary in order for these things to come to pass.
6. Joseph's discipline was harsh at times, but his rewards, both spiritual and temporal, were phenomenal.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Joseph and Potiphar

Joseph has been sold by some Midianites to some Medanites, a branch of the large Ishmaelite caravan which was traveling through the land, who in turn sold him to an Egyptian official who was impressed by Joseph's youth, intelligence and physical beauty. Joseph parlayed his spiritual growth into vocational prosperity.

**Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard [essentially, the chief of police], an Egyptian, bought him from the [lit., hand of the] Ishmaelites, who had brought him down there. [Gen. 39:1]**

As we will see, Joseph played quite a part in the story of Egypt for a short time; however, we have no corroborating records. This does make some sense as we have shortly after Joseph's time there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. If the artifacts and historical documents of his day were so meager that he didn't know enough about

<sup>119</sup> In the chapters to come, *one* of the brothers will surprise us.

Joseph to have an abiding respect for him, then we would be less likely today to find better records. So we cannot set up a coinciding history of the Jews and lay it along side of Egypt's history for this time period.

What should be true is that the author of this portion of God's Word—if Joseph is quite familiar with the customs and the culture of Egypt from the era—then this will be borne out in the next dozen chapters of Genesis. This lack of historical documentation and an examination of the parallels between this narrative and actual Egyptian culture and customs will be covered in more detail near the end of Gen. 41.

Potiphar's name means either *devoted to the sun god [Ra]* (Thieme) or *he whom the sun god gave* (BDB). This is based upon the assumption that his name has been shortened from Potiphara. Potiphar was the #3 man in Egypt. He was the chief of police of the empire of Egypt, a man with great wealth and responsibilities. Actually, there is some disagreement as to his actual position. Sar (שָׂר) [pronounced *sar*] means the head person of any rank. It could be reasonably translated *captain, ruler, chief, leader*, etc. The other portion of his title was *ṭabbâch* (טָבַח) [pronounced *tab-BAWKH*] and it is translated variously as *cook, executioner, bodyguard*. Gen. 40:1–4 tells us that the jail (the roundhouse, as we will see later) was his. Because this jail was used primarily to house prisoners prior to execution and to house those awaiting trial and because the word *tabbach* is very closely related to the Hebrew word for *slaughter*—*ṭâbach* (טָבַח) [pronounced *taw-BAKH*]—we would be safe to refer to him as the Captain of the Executioners. This would be an extremely narrow field, seeing that there could only be so many executioners; so it would be reasonable to suppose that he had other duties. That is, as Captain of the Executioners, we do not see the full realm of his control. *Tabbach* also apparently can be translated *guard, guardsmen*, so he would be Chief of the Executioners/Bodyguard<sup>120</sup>. Therefore, our concept of chief of police is not too far from what he did, as long as under those responsibilities we included heading over the executioners and the royal guard of the Pharaoh. According to James Freeman, in *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, Potiphar was in charge of the safe-keeping of all the state prisoners and for the execution of the sentences on them. When treason was involved, he might execute the prisoner himself. Not only did Potiphar have these multiferous responsibilities, but he had his own estate, a bastion of wealth, which he had to run. He had numerous slaves in and around his home.

Slaves came in all sizes, colors, shapes. Many were defeated people, some were old, and some had no means of support. A slave may or may not have harbored feelings of contempt. Some were slaves willingly and some were not.

Buying a slave then is not unlike hiring someone to work for you now. When you run a successful business and have a receptionist, the first and sometimes only contact that people make with the company is with the receptionist. There they should generally be attractive, well-dressed, poised, intelligent with great tact. When hiring someone for his own home, Potiphar, a man only second to Pharaoh in Egypt, needs someone with similar qualifications. This slave, like many of his slaves, are representatives of the household. Potiphar cannot have someone who is slovenly, with poor manners and sloppy work habits under him—that just looks bad for the second most powerful man in the country. Therefore, when someone like Joseph comes along who is young, intelligent, good-looking, with great poise and deference, this is exactly the kind of person that Potiphar wants under him.

**Application:** One of the many slogans in politics today is *pay a living wage*. That is, the thinking is, every job ought to pay enough to provide a wage that a person can live on (for whatever is considered a full week's work; for many, that is 40 hours<sup>121</sup>). The only circumstance which guarantees a living wage is that of a slave—whether he is a slave to an individual, a corporation or a nation (as in, a communist or socialist nation). Such slaves must be kept alive for them to be valuable; therefore, they must receive a living wage—whatever it takes to keep them alive. Many slaves throughout human history has received room and board during the time of their incarceration.

A slave could have a number of different functions. In the United States, when we had slavery, many worked outside in fields and some never came in the house. Joseph, because of his demeanor, was in the house almost from the beginning. He was wise enough to realize that nothing was gained by venting anger toward

<sup>120</sup> Other nations had a similar position—see 2Kings 25:8 Jer. 39:13 and Dan. 2:14

<sup>121</sup> I have, at age 65, reduced my work to 40 hours, if all the work that I do is considered.

Potiphar—Potiphar was simply a business man who bought what he believed to be a good slave. There was nothing to be gained by reacting against Potiphar because of this situation. Having spent some time with his father when his father began to grow spiritually, Joseph learned a great deal about the character of God and therefore did not fall apart when he was sold into slavery and taken to another country altogether.

**Yahweh was with Joseph and he became a successful man and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.** [Gen. 39:2]

The preposition used with the noun house is the beth (ב) preposition which means *in*. It can also mean *with, within, at, by*, but here the most likely use is *in*. Joseph's attitude was part of the reason that he found himself in a basically exalted position within Potiphar's staff—in the house—but it was primarily because God was there blessing him. Joseph was not to blame for his dreams or for his father's favoritism. Even though he was a bit of a priss in his younger days, he has matured quite a bit and God has watched over him.

The word used to describe Joseph is not an adjective but a verb (here, a Hiphil participle, which means it can be used like an adjective): tsâlach (צָלַח) [pronounced *tsaw-LAHCH*] and it means to advance, to prosper. In the Hiphil is the causative stem; Joseph is caused to be successful. This does not mean that people bring him money while he sits on a park bench feeding pigeons; he is faithful in his work and God blesses his work. There are people who work hard: 12–16 hours a day and never seem to get ahead. Not so with Joseph and not so with those who are blessed by God. Not only is he blessed and successful, but it is obvious to those around him that he is blessed, prosperous and successful.

**And his master saw that Yahweh was with him and all that he did Yahweh caused to prosper in his hands.** [Gen. 39:3]

Potiphar knew almost immediately as to Joseph's faith in the God of the Universe, Yahweh of the heavens. There are some people who can witness to you over and over again and they are total self-righteous pains. They are people with whom you hate to associate. Smart unbelievers can see right through their hypocrisy. Let me make it clear as I can: *it is not God's plan for every believer to go out and witness to ten people a day*. Jesus told some people to keep their healings a secret. Some people when they go out and witness do nothing but muddy up the water and anger unbelievers. We are not called to do that. It is to many people's advantage to keep their mouths shut for the first few months (or years) of their salvation. Then it *might* be apropos to witness to a stranger or a friend.

Potiphar both knew of Joseph's faith, he had respect for Joseph and recognized that what Joseph did was prospered. Potiphar was a very bright unbeliever; he knew when he had something good and he was not going to waste Joseph by sending him out to tend a field or to watch over some cattle. Joseph was to remain within his own household so that some of Joseph's blessing might fall also upon Potiphar. And, having a man so competent over his house was obviously good for Potiphar.

A consistent theme throughout Genesis with growing believers, is that some of those around them recognized that God blessed them. Laban saw that with Jacob; Abimelech saw this with Isaac; Potiphar sees this with Joseph. This was their testimony. Do we have the same testimony in our lives? Can someone look at us and see God's obvious blessing to us? Now there are certainly some of us who are under suffering for blessing but then the rest of us should be under God's blessing. You're not? Do you think God forgot? Do you think there might be a mistake in His plan? Certainly not. If you are a believer and you are not under suffering for blessing, then you should be under God's blessing *if you are a growing, maturing believer*. That is the key. You will have your own personality—don't think that for some reason the Holy Spirit turns your face upside down like a clown and that you are in emotional ecstasies all the time. That is a matter of personality and there are as many personalities as there are Christians. It is not sinful to have a personality and it is psychotic to undergo a personality change when you become a Christian (unless your personality was defined by sin).

In any case, if you are a growing believer, God will bless you. See the doctrine of the **Doctrine of Divine Blessing** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). If we are not blessed, then that is *our* choice not God's fault. If there is



anything which should characterize the life of the average believer it is God's blessing in our lives. If we do not experience this, it is not God's fault, it is ours. Now, so that there is no misunderstanding, my blessings are not the same as your blessings. When people begin to spiritually advance, God does not see to it that they own a nice Toyota; and when they reach spiritual maturity, God does not then make certain that every believer has a Lexus. If you are maturing or mature, you ought to be able to look around and identify how much God has blessed you in this life.

**So Joseph found favor [or, grace] in his sight and attended him and he made him overseer of his estate and of all that he had, he put in his charge [lit., hand].** [Gen. 39:4]

Potiphar, in most respects, was an exceptionally brilliant man. We will see one weakness of his later on in this respect, but he had the sense to recognize that God was blessing Joseph. Being secure in his position of power and authority, this did not threaten Potiphar, as it would some, but he chose to exploit this (in a good way). He elevates Joseph to great authority within his own house. *Shârath* (שָׂרָשׁ) [pronounced *shaw-RAHTH*] means *to minister, to attend, to serve*. A very similar word (differing only in a vowel point) means *to serve in a religious way*. Joseph was Potiphar's personal servant. When it comes to being a personal servant, we may have this confused notion of someone following after Potiphar and picking up the gum wrappers that he drops and occasionally brushing his tunic and the like. That is today known as a *personal assistant*. Joseph was more of an executive assistant, and he had responsibilities that he saw to, as if he were Potiphar. He could be trusted to carry out these responsibilities.

When we hear the word *slave*, we immediately think *menial labor*. Joseph was an exceptionally brilliant young man. Potiphar was not stupid so therefore Potiphar was not going to waste him on menial labor. Joseph was his right-hand man. The modern concept of an executive assistant may connote to some degree Joseph's duties and position; vice president or a second-in-command give a good idea as to Joseph's duties.

We just do not have a good counterpart in the United States to be able to grasp what is going on. Potiphar is one of the richest men in Egypt and probably a huge palace of a home (if not a palace of sorts) with many indentured servants, relatives perhaps. He might have 20 people in his household. This requires coordination of efforts. He has wealth, somewhat different than what we perceive as wealth, as much of it is in possessions, including land, rather than in stocks and bonds and mutual funds. All this requires some overseeing, some coordinating. Joseph, being the brightest person in the household, handled this. He was in charge of all of the servants and of all Potiphar's wealth. A rich person often will hire someone to manage his estate, his affairs and his wealth—someone who chooses when to invest, what to invest it in, when to take it out; etc. This is closer to the concept of what Joseph did.

Putting in his charge is the oft-used verb *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAN*] and it means *to place, to put, to give*. It is in the Qal perfect; Potiphar just turned the reigns of the household over to Joseph, having been looking for an intelligent, faithful right hand man for a long time. There is a masculine singular suffix at the end of the word, from whence we derive the word *his*. When used with the word *hand*, it means *to confer to him responsibility, to place in his charge, to put under his authority*. To put this in a modern perspective, if you turned your entire estate and wealth over to someone to manage on your behalf, this is what Potiphar did with Joseph.

The word which I translated *estate* is *bayith* (בַּיִת) [pronounced *BAH-yith*] means *house*, but it can be used for *several structures; for a prison, a palace, and a household*. Here, given Potiphar's position, we are speaking of a great estate, all of which Joseph is placed over in authority.

**And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his estate [house] and over all that he had, Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake and the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he had in [his] estate [lit., house and field].** [Gen. 39:5]

As Potiphar increased Joseph's responsibilities, he noticed that blessing occurred within Joseph's personal realm. When he put Joseph over his entire estate, then God blessed his entire estate. This is blessing by association, clearly stated. Most Christians have no interest in Gd's Word and the best that they can muster for their Christian

life is often nothing more than a miserable, in-the-flesh effort of some rancid human-good morality, so they do not have blessings in their own lives (other than the blessings of basic provisions) and the blessings to those around them are limited. This does not mean that their lives are terrible. A person who adheres to the laws of divine establishment often enjoys a wonderful life compared to those who opposes these laws. A person can by power-of-the-flesh observe and support the laws of divine establishment, and not grow at all spiritually; but they can have a good life. This is true of unbelievers who observe the laws of divine establishment; but they will spend eternity in hell after they die.

Not so when it comes to growing believers. Growing believers will see great blessings conferred upon those around them. Their families, their businesses, the firm that they work for, their friends, the marriages of their friends, those in their geographical periphery—all of these receive blessings from the hand of God because of their association with a growing and/or mature believer. A smart unbeliever will exploit this to his own benefit; a petty, stupid unbeliever will be jealous of the prosperity, even if it is his own.

Rotherham offers the alternative translation *...it came to pass that the blessing of Yahweh was with all that he had, at home and abroad.* The literal translation of *in the house and in the field* can be extended as Rotherham has, as *field* refers to a definite plot of land. Potiphar would have a great many investments, a chief investment being that of land during that time. Wherever his investments extended to, within or without Egypt, God prospered these investments because Potiphar was associated with Joseph and he obviously treated Joseph with respect and honor; more reason for God to bless him.

**So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge and he had no concern [lit., did not know] with regards to anything other than the food which he ate. [Gen. 39:6a]**

Because of Joseph's excellent abilities and efficiency, Potiphar did not have to bother with the piddling affairs of the household. He only had to worry about what he felt like eating. There is a bit more to this phrase than meets the eye. The Egyptians did not eat meals with some foreigner (Gen. 43:32), so Joseph was not involved in the meals of his master. Therefore, his master only had to worry about his own meals. Joseph had everything else under control.

When it reads that the Captain of the Executioners did not know anything other than what he ate, this is a metonymy where the verb *to know* is used with a different connotation than we understand. We have already seen this used to mean sexual relations; however, here, it means that Potiphar is not concerned about the things of his household; he had no anxiety concerning these things because Joseph took care of all the details of running his household.

This probably refers to more than his own meals. But, the idea is, Joseph's master only needed to concern himself with the stuff that he wanted to concern himself with. Anything else, he could depend upon Joseph to handle it.

**So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge and he had no concern [lit., did not know] with regards to anything other than the food which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. [Gen. 39:6]**

The last descriptors applied to Joseph meant that he was attractive in physic and had a good-looking face. Since Potiphar was a great man of distinction in his realm, he certainly would have attracted a beautiful wife, one who might tend to be on the superficial side, therefore lacking in character. She thought that when she married Potiphar that she had it made—they owned a huge home, they were the first or the second family of the land, they had great wealth and many servants—and having all of these things would make her think that she should be satisfied. She wasn't. She did not marry Potiphar out of love, but out of greed. She perhaps felt some fondness for him at first and possibly some lust, but her love had no true foundation in her character so she had no character. Therefore, someone like Joseph, who is more attractive and younger than her husband, and charming and brilliant and capable, turns her on. The physical description of Joseph, by way of information, is the same as his mother's (see Gen. 29:17).

## Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

**It then came about after these things that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, "Lie with me." [Gen. 39:7]**

*Cast* is the word *nâsâ'* (נָסָא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*] is the very common verb which means *to lift up, to carry, to take*. She lifts up her eyes and notices Joseph. Hebrew words often paint a picture. She looks toward the floor and essentially sees through everything, or is looking at really nothing—and then she lifts her eyes up a bit and sees Joseph and she stares. He has been there for awhile and when he first arrived, he was just some slave, far below her social status. So, she did not really look at him at first. However, given his brilliance and tact, his ability in all fields caused Potiphar to prosper. After this had gone on for awhile, this woman then notices Joseph and how handsome he is. Since her personal possessions are no longer enough to keep her entertained, she has decided that she needs to have Joseph in order to be happy. And she is a woman who is used to getting exactly what she wants.

We are sometimes confused by the woman's place in ancient history and mistakenly believe that women have always been docile, almost enslaved creatures from time immemorial, save for the past couple decades in the United States. This is patently untrue. The fifth century B.C. Greek historian, Herodotus, make comment concerning the great freedom enjoyed by Egyptian women during his time (a millennium later). Egyptian women of his time liked to be seen and did a great deal with cosmetology, fashion and hair styling.

Quoting from Manfred Barthel's book, *What the Bible Really Says: Egyptian women adorned and accentuated their eyelids with powdered lapis lazuli (a bright blue semiprecious stone), their eyelashes with antimony (a lustrous gray metallic power), and their eyebrows with balena (lead sulfide, a glossy black mineral pigment). A brilliant shade of crimson lipstick could be manufactured from cochineal, an organic dyestuff made from pulverized scale insects.* The book goes on to talk about hair rinses or wigs. These things are not forced upon women, they chose them out of their free will. Barthel also mentions an Egyptian poet wrote *I was like a dog that slept in the house, like a pet greyhound in my lady's bed, beloved of his mistress.* He also mentions the illustrated papyrus sex manuals, the more famous of these Papyrus 5501 all give credence to a woman such as Potiphar's wife.

**But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, with me [here], my master does not concern himself with anything in the house [lit., does not know what is in the house] and everything that he has he has put in my charge [lit., hand]. He is not greater in this house than I am nor has he kept back anything from me except you because you are his wife. How then can I do this great evil and sin against God?" [Gen. 39:8–9]**

V. 9a could possibly translated *there is none greater in this house than I*, which sounds better in English. However, when the thought is continued with *and he has not kept back anything from me except you* makes the way I have translated it the correct translation.

Joseph has matured greatly since we saw him with his brothers in the desert. He was an obnoxious, prissy tattletale in Gen. 37 and here he reveals that he has great wisdom. The most tremendous message here is that very last phrase, *how can I do this and sin against God?* He recognizes that all sin is against God. This shows great presence of mind and that he is occupied with Jesus Christ (that is, *the Revealed God*). He recognizes that he is observed constantly by God, that there are absolute rights and wrongs in life. He doesn't approach this as *!!! just give this a shot and then confess it later.* This woman is undoubtedly attractive, perhaps one of the most beautiful women of her day. She is not described as such because this is Joseph's narrative and he did not concentrate on her beauty. She had a position in that house as Potiphar's wife and that is how Joseph saw her. We have almost an entire generation of men who see absolutely nothing but a body and a face when they see a woman today; she is completely extracted from her personality, her obligations, her station in life. They see a woman almost exclusively as a sexual object, nothing more or less than what she can do for them. They are exactly the same as the dog in heat who rubs himself against animate and inanimate objects. Somehow we have fallen into great immorality where we guide our lives according to our lusts.

Joseph had character. He does not rationalize this; he does not spend time weighing the pros and cons, he does not start thinking *what if I did do this, what is the worst case scenario?* He understands that such a choice is absolutely wrong and that adultery is a sin against God. When David sinned with Bathsheba, having sex with a married woman, and then had her husband killed, something he was able to do having great authority; after suffering severe discipline, he finally confessed his sin to God and said, *Against you and you only have I sinned.* He does take the time to explain his decision to the woman, a woman who lacks conscience and character and deserves to be miserable for the rest of her life. What he says to her goes in one ear and out the other. She is under great lust and has subordinated all thought and morality to her lust for Joseph.

### Joseph Reasoning with Potiphar's Wife

Joseph appeals to her based upon:

- The trust and responsibility that Potiphar has conferred upon Joseph
- The fact that his master has withheld nothing from Joseph by way of possessions other than his wife
- Note that Joseph explains that **he** would be betraying his master if they did such a thing
- Potiphar has exalted Joseph to the highest position of the home next to himself; with power comes a sense of responsibility (which very few people recognize today—money, power, status, wealth all carry with them great responsibility and the person who does not realize that should not have any of those things)
- And Joseph is occupied with the person of Jesus Christ (which those in the household appear to recognize) and he points out that he would be sinning against his God, the God of the Universe.

Notice that Joseph does not:

- Patronize her by flattering her
- List the consequences of being caught
- Act self-righteously
- Side-step the issue at hand
- Bring up any false issues
- Degrade the Potiphar's wife in any way

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**And it came to pass although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her to lie with her or to be with her.** [Gen. 39:10]

Potiphar's wife was persistent. Some women do not like to be ignored; this woman expected to get her way eventually and she was intrigued by the chase. It was her house, and she would have her way within her house. It is interesting; from events which will follow, she was apparently as discreet as she was persistent as no one knew but Joseph what she was proposing. She was absolutely determined that she would have her way.

**But it came to pass during one day when he went into the house to do his work [that] there was no man there in the house from the men of the house.** [Gen. 39:11]

Two of the weaknesses of Owen's marvelous four volume *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* is that his word-by-word translations are less consistent than the KJV and the prepositions are not given any attention. They are translated, but the English-only reader is not keyed as to what preposition has been used. The word *day* is preceded by the kaph preposition<sup>122</sup> or k<sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k<sup>e</sup>], it means *like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately*. The kaph preposition with what follows means, literally, *as this day*. Others have translated this *as it is this day, as on this day, as at this day; about this time; but one day; once such day*.

<sup>122</sup> A kaph preposition looks very similar to a bēyth preposition, but they have very different meanings.

Most men would be greatly flattered by this attention and enjoy the temptation. They do not recognize how dangerous such a woman can be. There have always been the species of the predatory male, a male (not a man) who cares about nothing except satisfying his own desires. Here is the female counterpart; this woman does not care about her husband or about Joseph; she only is concerned with getting her way. Part of it is great sexual desire; but, part of it is, she wants to call all of the shots. She knows nothing about Joseph's character, as that is an aspect of a person that she would not understand. People like this have no character and do not have a clue as to what character is. They want something and they do whatever it takes to get it. If they do not get it, they take revenge on whoever stands in their way. Right and wrong is defined by what they want and what they don't want.

**She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me" but he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.** [Gen. 39:12]

Joseph seems to have trouble holding onto his clothes when it comes to those who despise him. He lost his many-fabric coat with the long sleeves to his brothers and now his garment to Potiphar's wife. The Bible recognizes man's basic weakness when it comes to women; this is why the Scripture says, **Flee fornication** (1Cor. 6:18a). There are certain men which women should automatically avoid, no matter what; and certain women that men should avoid no matter what.

**And it came to pass when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, (saying), "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew man to insult us. He came in to me to lie with me and I screamed [lit., cried out with a loud voice]." [Gen. 39:13–14]**

This is only the second time in the Bible the word *Hebrew* is used. We do not find it much in the Old Testament anyway—around 35 times. 'Ib<sup>e</sup>rîy (יִבְרִי) [pronounced *ġi<sup>be</sup>-VREE*] means *one from beyond, from the other side [either the other side of the Euphrates or Jordan]*. It describes someone who came from outside of that country. Here it is used as an adjective to modify the word man. It is reasonable to translate the two words together as *Hebrew* because we use the word today more as a noun than as an adjective. It seems to be a word used more often by Gentiles to name Jews (here, almost in derision). A possible theory that crops up in my mind is that this word is applied several times to individual Jews—a word that means *foreigner* essentially—until the Jew finally accepted it as applying to them. Here it seems to be used as a term of derision, as though she spits the words out.

Briefly, the name *Hebrew* is how other nations referred to the Israelites (Ex. 1:15 2:6).

### The Word "Hebrew"

- In the Hebrew, the word Hebrew is 'Ib<sup>e</sup>rîy (יִבְרִי) [pronounced *ġi<sup>be</sup>-VREE*], which is poorly transliterated as *Hebrew*. This word, interestingly enough, is found most often in the books of Genesis, Exodus and 1Samuel. Apart from those books, we find it once in Deuteronomy, thrice in Jeremiah and once in Jonah. We first find this mentioned back in Gen. 14:13 in reference to Abraham, when we discussed it in more detail. Strong's #5680 BDB #720. There are two suggested origins for the word *Hebrew*.
  - One possibility is that Abraham had an ancestor named Eber. In the Hebrew, that is 'Ēber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced *ĠAY<sup>b</sup>-ver*], which means, *one from beyond, the other side, across, region on the other side*; and is transliterated *Eber, Heber, Hebrew, Eberite*. Strong's #5677 BDB #720. There appear to be times in the Bible when a person of a specific name actually has that name changed somewhat, to reflect information about that person.
  - The other possibility is that the name comes from the verb 'âbar (עָבַר) [pronounced *ġaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. The idea is that Abraham crossed over the Euphrates River to disassociate himself with his heathen roots.
- Today, we obviously use the names *Israel, Israelite* and *Hebrew* synonymously. However, historically, the name *Hebrew* was first applied to Abraham 500 years prior to the establishment of the nation Israel.
- Suggested hypothesis: *Hebrew* is a word used by Israel to designate themselves before foreigners

## The Word "Hebrew"

(Ex. 2:6–7, 13 3:18 5:3) and it is a name used by non-Israelites to refer to the Israelites (1Sam. 4:6). In other words, this is a term which separates the Israelites from non-Israelites and is not generally used apart from making such a distinction.<sup>1</sup> However, we find this word used in 1Sam. 13:7 which does not denote such a distinction.

4. In Gen. 14, the chapter of the war of the kings, when the four kings took Lot as a prisoner (he was thought to be a Sodomite because his close proximity to these people), one escaped and came and told Abraham, the *Hebrew* what had happened. This narrative is probably written by (or recounted by) Abraham who is wandering the land. The man who told Abraham may have thought of him as a foreigner, inasmuch as he was unrelated to the war between the nine kings (Gen. 14:13).
5. In Gen. 39:14, 17, the word is used in what appears to be a derogatory way. Joseph has resisted this woman of Potiphar's many times, so that she becomes frustrated and accuses him of rape.
6. Joseph uses this word when describing himself while explaining his situation to the chief cupbearer in Gen. 40:15. Since there were only a bit more than a few dozen Jews in the world at that time, so that the terms Jew and Hebrew were not yet synonymous. The term Hebrew was applied to Joseph by his accuser (a term he no doubt heard prior to the accusation and during his sentencing because of her accusation), so Joseph applies it to himself. Here, in Egypt, it likely refers to those from Canaan or those from beyond the land of Egypt. When the chief cupbearer remembers, he uses this term (Gen. 41:12).
7. Hebrew is used in connection with racial prejudice in Gen. 43:32. Joseph ate alone, his brothers ate at another table, and the Egyptians ate at another table because Egyptians did not eat with Hebrews. Even at that time, they were seen as outsiders.
8. This name had become fully associated with Jews during the period of slavery to the Egyptians between Genesis and Exodus (Ex. 1:15, 16, 19 2:6, 7, 11, 13).
9. God uses this term to apply to the Jews in Ex. 3:18 Deut. 15:12 (see also Ex. 5:3 7:16 9:1, 13 10:3 21:2). Note that these uses were always applied to the Jew when they were in a foreign land (in Gen. 14:13, they were still considered sojourners in a foreign land, even though they were in the land of Canaan).
10. It is significant that this word is not found in Joshua, Judges, Ruth Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, or Isaiah.
11. The Jews became fully associated with the term *Hebrew* by the time of Samuel; that is, the terms were interchangeable (1Sam. 4:6, 9 13:19 14:11, 21 29:3 Jer. 34:9, 14)
12. The Jews applied this term to themselves (1Sam. 13:3, 7)
13. The Hebrews were also closely associated in the minds of foreigners with Yahweh Elohim (Jonah 1:9)

<sup>1</sup> This was suggested by Gnana Robinson, 1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, ©1993; p. 32. This commentary is not known for having accurate information.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Notice that sexual lust has nothing to do with the object being so wonderful that the person who is in lust cannot help themselves. This woman cares nothing for Joseph. She is pissed off and she will accuse him of attempted rape. If anything, the subject of sexual lust (where there is not first an established love) has contempt for the object. In any case, it is not favorable. A person who commits rapes cares nothing whatsoever about the object of his rape. The more degenerate, brutal rapist kills his victim before, after or during. She is no different from a rapist, in terms of how she views the object of her lust. She will cause Joseph to spend a great deal of time in prison.

**"And it came to pass when he heard that I screamed [lit., lifted up or raised my voice] and called [out], he left his garment with me and fled and got out of the house."** [Gen. 39:15]

For many years in literature, *to cry* or *to cry out* did not mean to shed tears and make whimpering noises. It meant *to scream aloud* or *to proclaim* or even *to read aloud*. Qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] is what the Hebrew word is and translated here *called [out]*. An Hebrew word which is spelled exactly the same means *to encounter*,

to meet, so it is therefore inferred that she is calling out to someone or that this word means *to accost someone* or *to confront them*.

This woman is angry and she gets her story straight right to begin with. She tells anyone that she can get back into the house what happened in order for her story to have more weight. She possibly had this planned out completely. She would either seduce Joseph while no one was around or she would grab his garment and accuse him of rape. No one was around so it would be easy to make her charge stick. After all, who would contest the accusation of Potiphar's wife against a Hebrew slave? Her plan was fool proof. She would either have Joseph or revenge.

**Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home. And she told him the same story, saying "The Hebrew servant, which you have brought among us to insult me, came in to me. But it was as I screamed and cried, he left his garment with me and fled out of the house."**

[Gen. 39:16–18]

### Joseph and the Warden of the Prison

**And it came to pass when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "This is the way your servant treated me"; he began to seethe with anger [lit., his anger was kindled].**

[Gen. 39:19]

Potiphar reacted as any man should have reacted in this situation; he was infuriated and his anger continued to grow. He trusted Joseph with everything—his possessions, his authority, his wealth—and he saw this as the ultimate betrayal. It never occurs to him that his wife is lying (at least, this is never suggested within the narrative; he never appears to give Joseph a fair hearing).

Based upon what we have seen here, undoubtedly she has had an affair before, but managed to keep it well-hidden. Or, she had just reached the stage of her marriage where she realized that she was not happy with great power and possessions so she chose to chase after happiness in sex. As you see, the Bible, even its oldest portions (this incident occurred 4000 years ago), are completely relevant to today.

**And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison [lit., the round house]—the place where the prisoners of the king were confined so he was there in prison.** [Gen. 39:20]

I don't know if many people have noticed this, but we do not have a word for prison here. Çôhar (סֹחַר) [pronounced *SOH-hahr*] and it is found only in this portion of God's word. It means *round house*, and note that the first syllable is accented. This indicates that this is probably an Egyptian word which has been Hebraized; and the author, Joseph, knowing that his readers would not necessarily be familiar with this word, becomes more explicit and explains what this word means. Ancient Eastern customs generally place the state prison as a portion of the Captain of the Executioners house, or an adjacent building. This is confirmed in Gen. 40:3. A similar situation is found in Jer. 32:2 and 37:15.

According to Manfred Barthel, the prison mentioned was a holding cell for those awaiting trial and those awaiting execution. Those criminals who had been tried and prosecuted were already out on a work force for the mines or the papyrus swamps. This holding cell was one very large room with some holes in the walls whereby friends and family of the prisoners could keep the prisoners supplied with food (otherwise they would starve to death). Sentence could only be passed after a formal hearing was held. We have a great many records concerning the judicial system of Egypt, something about which they were proud.

There is a Hebrew word for *tie, bind, imprison* and that is 'âçar (אָצַר) [pronounced *aw-SAR*]. From this we get the word 'âçîyr (אָצִיר) [pronounced *aw-SERE*], a rarely used Hebrew word (ten times<sup>123</sup>) which means *prisoner*,

<sup>123</sup> 'âçar, on the other hand, is used over 60 times in the OT

*captive, one who is bound.* Since the latter word is used so infrequently, the first word is introduced in order to substantiate the meaning of the second. The Jews did not use prisons and God nowhere in the law ordains sentencing criminals to prison for so many years.<sup>124</sup>

What is prescribed is death or maiming, appropriate to the crime; penalties far more severe than we are used to in the United States. We have been so subjective when it comes to the rights of the criminal, the possibility of injustice, that our system bends over backwards to give criminals many chances, to allow criminals ways to escape prosecution through legal loopholes, resulting in a crime-ridden society where now a disproportionate number of children and adults have become heavily involved in criminal activity due to a laxity and overindulgent judicial system. When a person commits a crime and the evidence points directly and unequivocally to that person, there should be no legal loopholes regardless and they should receive harsh, unforgiving sentences (death for 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murderers, rapists, and drug pushers). Those in jail should not receive a great deal of free time wherein they bully and rape other prisoners, but their activities should be many, varied, on a tight schedule, and fully supervised. Those who do not participate or cause problems remain locked up in their cells or required to do their entire sentence.

Back to the topic at hand; it is implied here that there are other prisons in Egypt, but this was the king's personal prison.

Another word of note: the head of state in Egypt is generally called *Pharaoh* (Gen. 12:15 37:36 40:7 etc.). The use of the word *king* here (and in Gen. 40:1 41:46 Ex. 1:8) is probably nothing more than a difference between the Hebrew word for the ruler of a country and the Hebraized Egyptian designation for same. Although each and every word in the Scriptures is inspired by the Holy Spirit, the writer of Scripture is allowed full use of his own personal vocabulary; and some of us with a vocabulary like to use synonyms to dress up the writing somewhat. Many thoughts, ideas and narratives could be explained with a vocabulary of 500 words, but the reading would be far more interesting when a 2000 word vocabulary is used, and intriguing, if you will, when a 10,000 word vocabulary is employed. Joseph is a man of exceptional brilliance and we would expect him to use Egyptian words, not found elsewhere (or, at least not very often, and then as a result of seeing them used here), and a top-notch Hebrew vocabulary, as he is apparently well-studied (recall, he stayed at home while his brothers minded the flocks). During his time at home, he learned Bible doctrine from his father who, late in life, finally entered into some sort of maturity.

There is the possibility that this is a different/new dynasty in Egypt; and the way that they referred to themselves was different.

It is possible what Joseph did was an executable offense; however, his master had too much respect and love for him to put him to death. Perhaps he simply said, "I need to have this man in prison and I never want to see his face ever again." So Joseph went to the round house, where the Pharaoh chose to keep his own personal prisoners. There was a bit of intrigue in the castle and we will have Joseph staying with two high-ranking officials of the king's. Joseph is about 27 years of age when he was first cast into prison (Gen. 41:46).

**But Yahweh was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him grace in the sight of the warden of the prison.** [Gen. 39:21]

Under the Captain of the Executioners/Bodyguard was the warden of the jail. His title included the word *sar* (שַׂר) [pronounced *sar*], which means *chief, captain*; *bayith* (בַּיִת) [pronounced *BAH-yith*], which means *house*; and *çôhar* (חֹהַר) [pronounced *SOH-har*], meaning *roundness*. The round house was the jail, as we have seen, and this was the man in charge of the prison. Therefore I have translated his position as the warden of the prison. There are likely several prisons, although this might be called the royal prison where the most distinguished guests might be held.

<sup>124</sup> To be safe, perhaps I shouldn't say that until I have exegeted all of the Pentateuch



It does not matter what your circumstances are in life; no matter to what depth you have sunk, no matter what prosperity you might enjoy; with positive volition, God is with you. Joseph is a mature believer who was sold in slavery, a circumstance which would seem beyond hope. Immediately God placed him in the second richest home in Egypt under the second most powerful man of Egypt, and, by demonstrating faithfulness in the little things, Joseph was promoted above every person in that house other than Potiphar, the chief of police.

**Furthermore, the warden of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it.** [Gen. 39:22]

The NASB translates that last phrase, *and whatever was done there, he [Joseph] was responsible [for it]*. This gives us a good sense as to the meaning of this phrase, even though we do not have the Hebrew word for *responsibility* here. This is what Joseph undertook and what he was responsible for. Not only did these fall within the realm of his responsibilities, but he did the things for which he was responsible. Having the responsibility to do something and to actually do it are two different things.

One of the most rewarding things in life is to have great responsibility and to execute one's responsibilities admirably. Not everyone would care for this and not everyone does well with it. There are some people in management who chose that goal for the power and the salary and, for those reasons, despise their work. They have no responsibility, no integrity, and therefore, do not enjoy their work. Performance and responsibility should always accompany the work than any born-again believer commits to.

Joseph showed outstanding organizational ability and was the best person when it came to detail work and grasping the big picture. Joseph gained these great responsibilities because he was faithful in the little things and noble, as we have seen with Potiphar's wife. Furthermore, despite what has been done to him, not once do we hear him recount his past in bitterness. His brothers turned against him; Potiphar's wife lied about him, and we do not ever hear a word of bitterness emanate from his mouth. Some souls are eaten up in bitterness and almost cannot function because the bitterness that they carry is so great. God vindicates doctrinal assets and personal character and has promoted Joseph no matter where Joseph happened to find himself. He is one of the most important super-grace heroes of the Old Testament. Notice at the preface of this chapter how much time in Genesis is spent on Joseph; Genesis, which runs from the beginning of the history of the earth, billions of years before man, and extends all the way to approximately 1800 B.C., devotes over one-fifth of its text to Joseph. How many of us will be a statistic or a footnote in Christian history? It takes nothing more than faithfulness and doctrine.

**The chief warden had no need to oversee anything that was in his [Joseph's] care [lit., concerning nothing was the warden of the prison supervising of whatever was in his hand] in that Yahweh was with him; furthermore, whatever he did, Yahweh made it prosper.** [Gen. 39:23]

Râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AW*] is the simple word for *to see*, but it has many applications. Here, in this context, it has to do with *overseeing, supervising, attending to*. Joseph made life easy for those around him. He did not need credit for what he had done; he just did it, without looking for reward or compensation or credit. He was a man of great integrity, something as difficult to find then as now.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 40** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 40

### Genesis 40:1–23

**Introduction:** Things have changed in our dispensation. In the past, prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, God spoke to men in a number of ways, one of which was through dreams. There was a *gift* of sorts, which was the interpretation of dreams, which Joseph had. In this chapter we will see God speak to two cabinet officials of the Pharaoh through dreams and we will see Joseph interpret these dreams correctly. However, Joseph will make one mistake; he will then depend upon man instead of God and it will cost him two years of his life.

- Vv. 1–4      **Heads of state are incarcerated with Joseph**
- Vv. 5–19      **The dreams of the heads of state**
- Vv. 20–23      **The disposition of the heads of state**

#### Heads of State Are Incarcerated with Joseph

**And it was some time after this [that] the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord, the king of Egypt.** [Gen. 40:1]

First of all, we need to know who these people are.

#### What is a Chief Cupbearer?

Mash<sup>e</sup>qeh (מִשְׁקֵה) [pronounced *mahsh-KEH*] is related to the Hebrew word for drink (it has the same root), which is how we receive the translation *cupbearer*. He will be called the chief cupbearer in v. 2, indicating that his position was more exalted than one who wanders around carrying sippy cups for Pharaoh. Thieme lists him as equivalent to the head of our state department, the second highest official in the king's house. Douglas's *New Bible Dictionary* lists him as one who drinks prior to the pharaoh to insure that the pharaoh is not being poisoned. ZPEB lists him as a man who serves wine to the king, which is a position of great trust due to the possibility of intrigue. In this intimate setting with the king, he wields great personal and political influence.

Nehemiah is the cupbearer to the Persian king, Artaxerxes Longimanus (Neh. 1:11) and Solomon had men in that position (1Kings 10:5 2Chron. 9:4).

The king had a large number of people with whom he came in contact. These would be heads of state from other countries, individual rulers within his realm; officials in his realm; people who seek and are granted audience with the king. It is impossible to keep all of these names straight and to be able to tell one from another; the chief cupbearer stands as the Pharaoh's side and whispers their names and positions into Pharaoh's ear. This way the Pharaoh appears to be able to remember the names of all those with whom he must speak. This way certain dignitaries are not insulted when, after speaking to Pharaoh for fifteen minutes, Pharaoh stopping them and saying, "Just who are you, anyway?" Or, "Now, what was your name again?"

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Who is the Chief Baker?

Baker is the word ʾâphâh (אֲפַיִחַ) [pronounced *aw-FAW*] and it does mean *baker*. The information that I've put together other than that is purely guesswork; Thieme named him the third highest official in the land, similar to a chief of internal affairs. Because of political intrigue and the number of pharaoh's who died by poisoning, the men who poured the wine and cooked the food for the pharaoh had to be two of the most trusted people in pharaoh's realm. Therefore, these would be men with whom pharaoh would share his greatest confidences.

What they did against the pharaoh was châṭâ' (חָטְאוּ) [pronounced *khaw-TAW*], and it is the Hebrew word for *to sin, to miss the mark, to wrong*. This is in the Qal perfect, indicating that something happened completed action (although it could have been more than one incident), and the pharaoh was wronged by one of these two men. Very likely he got a dose of poison—and he did not know whether it was in his food or drink, so he put them both into lockdown until he had a chance to thoroughly investigate the matter.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Therefore Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, so he put them in the custody of the house of the captain of the guard in the prison; the place where Joseph was confined.** [Gen. 40:2–3]

Ṭabbâchîym (טַבְּחִיִּים) [pronounced *tahb-bawkh-EEM*] means *cooks, butchers, guards or guardsmen*, an odd combination. I wonder if there is some linguistic background for this that we are missing. This again could be a connection between those attached to the king's bodyguard also being the one's who saw to his meals. This word is used in both ways throughout the Old Testament (cook: 1Sam. 9:23–24 but mostly as a guard or bodyguard—2Kings 25:8, 10, 11 Jer. 39:9–11).

It was Eastern tradition for the state prison to be an attached portion of the home of the chief of the executioners, or some other high ranking official (including the king, in some cases). So we are speaking of this man's literal house; just an added portion to it.

Notice how detailed chapter 39 was and how sketchy these couple verses are. This would indicate that authorship belongs to Joseph. The information which we find in these verses would be representative of information which Joseph received from these men upon their incarceration. Since, he was in charge of the jail (for all intents and purposes) he would come into regular, congenial contact with the other prisoners.

**The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them and he waited (or, ministered to them) on them and they continued for some time [lit., days] in custody.** [Gen. 40:4]

This verse indicates that they spent some time in prison before Pharaoh was able to render a decision. According to Bullinger, this use of days means a year. We do not know the nuts and bolts of what occurred outside the prison and how Pharaoh came to the decision that he will come to; we will only hear about what occurs inside the prison (with the exception of a few sketchy details of life on the outside).

### The Dreams of the Heads of State

**And they dreamed a dream, each in his own dream one night, each with its own meaning, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt who were confined in the prison.** [Gen. 40:5]

You might call Joseph a rather windy writer. He many times will say *and it came to pass* to begin a phrase because this is his way of writing. He will name these two several times whereas other writers refer to various people in their periphery with a continual stream of pronouns. We should notice this style throughout the remainder of Genesis.

The dreams they had are God speaking to them. Actually, God will speak to them through Joseph, who will interpret these dreams.

We are not called upon to search out those who interpret dreams anymore. Scripture was rare. Jacob likely had all the Holy Scriptures in his possession at this time, unlike today where literally everyone has the opportunity to hold the entire canon of Scripture in their own hands. Today, God speaks to us through His Word, primarily through pastor teachers teaching us from the Word. This is fairly easy to gauge—the pastor to whom you listen should continually have you in the Word and should continually lead you verse-by-verse through the Word. Our focus in worship should be God's Word because we worship Him by learning about Him and His character.

**When Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them, they were troubled.** [Gen. 40:6]

These dreams were more than just dreams, a scattered recollection of what had occurred of them throughout the day combined with whatever happened to be on their mind. These were dreams which they knew had meaning; powerful dreams that stirred them, but the interpretation thereof they had not.

**So he asked Pharaoh's officers (or noblemen) who were with him in custody in his master's house saying, "Why are you depressed (or despondent) today [lit., why are your faces downcast today]?"** [Gen. 40:7]

Çârîyç (סַרְיִס) [pronounced *saw-REECE*] comes from the unused root *to castrate* and is therefore often translated eunuch. Due to the fact that some kings would surround themselves with eunuchs as officials, this word came to mean *officer, nobleman*. Potiphar, for whom Joseph first worked, whose wife put Joseph in prison through her deception, was a cariyç. In our context, it is not necessary to assume that any of these men are eunuchs but that they were noblemen. Interestingly enough, this term is never used in any of the Mosaic Law codes.

I also read that, the meaning *eunuch* was actually a later meaning, but that this first applied to officials of a government. Quite obviously, these two understandings are at odds with one another.

Joseph was an observant, attentive person who did not need to have the conversation centered around himself and his problems. He did not need to be the focus of attention and since he was not focused on himself, he was able to sympathize with others and to notice others. He notices that both of them are rather sullen.

**So they said to him, "We have had dreams and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell [to] me [these dreams]."** [Gen. 40:8]

Joseph was not afraid to speak of his God at anytime. He knew God's Word and he was a mature believer. He is the kind of person that God wants to have witness on His behalf. He knows what he is talking about; unlike other amateurs who confuse people with their half-baked witnessing. Recall, Jesus did not tell everyone whom he healed or spoke to immediately go out and tell all of their friends. Some people were not designed to witness of anyone else. Most people do not have enough doctrine to witness to anyone else until they have been saved for a few decades (and usually not even then).

**Application:** As you learn more doctrine and exercise more positive volition toward the Word of God, your thinking will change and your attitude will change. When we are first saved, we think that we need to get out there and witness and give our testimony and start thinking about missionary work. At the same time, we do not really want to tell people about Jesus Christ or about our own conversion because we don't know that much about either one. When it comes to the Christian life, you learn first; you grow first; then you begin applying the doctrine which you

have learned. There is no reason for us to feel like we have to do all these great things for God before we really understand what has happened to us after being saved.

**So the chief cupbearer to to Joseph his dream and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, ripened the clusters into grapes. Furthermore, the Pharaoh's cup was in my hand and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."**

[Gen. 40:9–11]

This man has a clear conscience; he has been falsely accused of intrigue. He is the most enthusiastic to present his dream to Joseph. Whereas some have asserted that wine was not drunk by the ancient Egyptians (a passage in Herodotus has been used as evidence to support this), we have this passage which implies that they did. Furthermore, we now have monuments which have on them pictures of the articles used to make wine, including wine presses, and pictures of drunken men and women.

Nevertheless, the pressing of the grapes into a cup can refer to simple grape juice.

**Then Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation: the three branches are three days; within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand [lit. palm] as before [lit., according to former judgment] when you were his cupbearer."** [Gen. 40:12–13]

Kên (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], as a noun, has two related, but different meanings. It can refer to the *base* or *pedestal* of something; or it can mean a *position, office, or place*. We have previously examined this word used as a verb and as a particle in previous chapters of Genesis.

Joseph had not studied dreams in a university somewhere, or been taught dream interpretation by his father. There are not a predefined set of symbols which he learned and was able to make sense of this dream. Joseph was guided by the Holy Spirit who took this figurative series of images and gave them sense. Since God is able to speak to us today through His Word (we would be arrogant to think He needs to speak to us personally through a dream or through voices) because everything we need to know about our life is in God's Word. The lifting up of his head refers to restoring this man to his former position; his head was hung down because he had been not just demoted but removed from his high position to the lowest of the low; placed with criminals and possibly awaiting prosecution and execution.

However, Joseph will now make a serious mistake. This is a mistake which will seem innocuous to us now, but it is important enough for God to discipline Joseph for an additional year or two. God placed Joseph in the prison for a reason. God was going to promote Joseph even beyond where he had established himself in the house of the chief of police. However, Joseph was to depend upon God and not upon man. **Thus says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who trust in man and make flesh his strength [lit., arm]; whose heart turns away from the Lord."** (Jer. 17:5) When Israel was thinking of making an alliance with evil Egypt, rather than to depend upon God during a time of national crisis, God said: **Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help; to rely on horses and trust in chariots because they are many; and in horsemen because they are very strong yet they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord. The Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses are flesh and not spirit; so the Lord will stretch out His hand and he who helps will stumble and he who is helped will fall; and all of them will come to an end together.** (Isa. 31:1, 3) Our trust should be in God at all times and never in man. This is important in marriage; by way of application, our trust for happiness should be in God through His Word, not in our mate. If you depend upon your spouse for happiness, you have guaranteed yourself misery as a person. This is not to say that your spouse will not give you great happiness; the key is that your dependence for happiness should be upon God.

**"But remember me when it is well with you. Please so me the kindness to make mention of me to Pharaoh and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the**

**Hebrews and here also I have done not anything that they should put me into the dungeon [lit., pit]." [Gen. 40:14–15]**

They have been in prison for a year together (according to some interpretations). Joseph has had the opportunity to speak to many different people about his situation. He has chosen not to. He does not tell every prisoner with whom he comes in contact that he is innocent. Up until now, he has depended upon God. However, he finally breaks down and makes the mistake of depending upon this man. He tells him what happened.

Joseph has every confidence that this man will be released from prison and restored to his former position. This man who stands at the ear of his Pharaoh and introduces myriads of people as they come to speak to the Pharaoh; a man whose duties include remembering the names of hundreds of people with whom the Pharaoh speaks. This man will forget Joseph because Joseph is depending upon man and not upon God.

While Joseph is listening to this man's dream and giving the interpretation thereof, the chief baker is standing at the side, listening carefully. He was guilty of intrigue. He did try to have the king poisoned and he is particularly worried that the king will find out. He listens to Joseph's interpretation of the chief cupbearer's dream and decides that this interpretation was not too bad—he should probably do okay when it comes to the interpretation of his own dream.

**When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head and in the uppermost basket [were] all sorts of food for Pharaoh; the work of a baker. However, the birds were eating it [lit., them] out of the basket on my head." [Gen. 40:16–17]**

In Egypt, men carried baskets on their heads, causing their head and neck muscles to become extremely well-developed. According to Freeman, they became strong enough to support burdens that required three men to lift in the first place. Women in Egypt carried items on their shoulders.

The chief baker was guilty and did not want this guilt to come out in any way. He did not want to have Joseph interpret a dream which reveals him as the center of the machination for which he and the cupbearer had been incarcerated. However, Joseph's interpretation of the other dream was not even just innocuous, it was favorable. It would also have appeared odd had he awakened with a strange dream with bothered him, as did the chief cupbearer, but for him not to share this dream.

**Then Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation: the three baskets are three days; within three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and hang you on a tree and the birds will eat the flesh from you." [Gen. 40:18–19]**

Often in the Greek and Hebrew, a tree (or wood) is used figuratively for what was made out of the wood. Egypt was not a wild west town where some vigilantes regularly took alleged criminals out to the nearest tree and hung them; Egypt had gallows which were built for executions. Being hung on a tree refers to an official gallows which has been constructed.

Notice that the *lifting of the head* is used in two ways in this passage: it means to restore one to one's former position (v. 13) and here it means to hang. Obviously this was not the interpretation that the baker wanted to hear. We do not know whether these interpretations were instrumental to the final disposition of this case. Certainly this would have caused the baker to panic; there may have been some furtive conversations with his own family members or with those who were involved in this plot to assassinate the king. In any case, the Pharaoh had determined who the guilty party was within three days.

### The Disposition of the Heads of State

**On the third day, which was the birthday of Pharaoh, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position [lit., to cupbearer] and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand; but the chief baker, he hanged, as Joseph had interpreted to them.**  
[Gen. 40:20–22]

Eastern kings celebrated their birthdays by holding great feasts and by pardoning some of their prisoners. Pharaoh seized this opportunity to pardon the chief cupbearer. Probably the Pharaoh did not free him earlier, even though he had realized that he was not guilty because the Pharaoh did not want to incarcerate someone and then let them out, indicating that he made a mistake in the first place. This birthday tradition allowed Pharaoh to pardon prisoners due to his mercy and not because he made a mistake. This further tells us that these prisoners were likely in jail for a year.

Joseph, since he was in fellowship when he interpreted the dreams, gave them their proper interpretation. This was a part of God's plan during his time. However, when he asked the chief cupbearer to remember him, a man whose duty is was to remember names, Joseph was depending upon man and not upon God and therefore, God set him aside for awhile. We have to be oriented and the further along that we go in God's plan and the greater are the blessings to us, the more responsibility we assume. Joseph's bothers have committed sins that most of us would judge to be far worse than this; however, they did not receive discipline to this extent. I know there are a few of you thinking right now that perhaps you shouldn't pursue God's plan as avidly as you have for fear of excessive discipline. With freedom and with blessing comes responsibility. The further we go into God's plan, the greater our happiness and the more we are allowed to participate in His plan. However, we do face greater responsibility for our actions and greater penalties because of our position. When a quarterback makes a mistake, it is remembered for a long time; however, when he scores a touchdown, he receives far greater glorification than those who made this possible. When you have a great deal of wealth, and many of you hearing or reading this will; there is responsibility for having this wealth. Certainly it is God's blessing to us; but God has given us this wealth for a purpose.

It is supposed by some that the Egyptians did not hang. However, during the time of Joseph, we have an historical blackout with regards to Egypt (to be covered in the next chapter). Cultures change and certainly a period of 400 years is enough time to change methods of execution. What we know about ancient Egypt (but ot from that precise time period) is that executions were rare as few crimes were punishable by death. For instance, the man involve in adultery could be put to death; as were enemies of the state (which would be the chief baker). At times, some men of high rank were given the opportunity to take their own lives with poison. Other punishments included hard labor, flogging and physical mutilation for lessor offenses.

**Yet, the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.** [Gen. 40:23]

Here we have a man whose duty it is to remember names for the Pharaoh; he has had his dream correctly interpreted by Joseph; and he forgets Joseph. It sounds as though the very same thing is being stated in the negative and in the positive. This is true; when an extremely important point is made, the writer will often say the exact same thing in two ways so that it sticks in our minds. The fact that this man, whose duty it is to remember names, forgot Joseph's, is the emphasize to us that we are to depend upon God, not upon man, for our deliverance and prosperity.

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 41** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 41

### Genesis 41:1–57

**Introduction:** Because Joseph depended upon man rather than God, God left Joseph in prison for another two years. Joseph was about to take on the of the most important positions in the world given to him by God, yet God set him aside for two years. None of us are so important as to be people that God cannot do without. A majority of the Christians today have been sidelined. They have little or no value in God's plan because they do not have God's Word abiding in them. Joseph made a tiny error, it would seem to some, but it was serious enough for God to bench him for an additional two years. During this time, Joseph experienced even greater spiritual growth. He will emerge from prison a mature believer, ready to execute the plan of God. God has a plan for us and that plan includes His timing and our orientation to His plan. Joseph became temporarily benched, disoriented to the plan of God, depending upon man rather than upon God. Joseph's position would be crucial to the Jews and to the Egyptians; he had to be his own man under God. He could not assume the position that he did and yet depend upon man.

The general outline of the chapter goes as follows:

- Vv. 1–7      **The Pharaoh's dream**
- Vv. 8–13    **The chief cupbearer remembers Joseph**
- Vv. 14–32   **Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh**
- Vv. 33–37   **Joseph's advice to Pharaoh**
- Vv. 38–46   **Joseph is elevated to second-in-command over all of Egypt**
- Vv. 47–49   **Joseph oversees during the seven years of prosperity**
- Vv. 50–52   **Joseph's sons**
- Vv. 53–57   **Joseph oversees during the seven years of famine**

Charts, Short Doctrines and Maps:

- v. 36      **Taxes in the Bible**
- v. 54      **The Famine and God's Plan**
- v. 56      **Problems with Simply Giving the Grain Away**
- Addendum   **The Egyptian Dynasties**

### The Pharaoh's Dream

**And it was at the end of two entire years Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile.**

[Gen. 41:1]

The author (Joseph) does not write simply *two years later*. The author was in prison for two years, unjustly so. Therefore, he uses the phrase *[two] years of days*. *Years* is in the dual, meaning a plural of two and it is followed by *days* which does not modify *years* per se, as *years* is in the dual, feminine and *days* is in the masculine plural. However, Joseph experienced this time period in terms of days, one day at a time to think about his mistake.



Although this is not really discussed in this chapter, it appears that Joseph understood his mistake and did not repeat it.

**And [he] saw coming out of the Nile seven cows, healthy-looking and well-fed and they fed in the reed grass and [he] saw seven other cows coming up after them, out of the Nile, unhealthy-looking and malnourished; and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile and the unhealthy-looking and malnourished cows ate up the seven healthy-looking and well-fed cows; and Pharaoh awoke. [Gen. 41:2–4]**

The first seven cows are described by both Owen and the NASB as *sleek and fat*, which is some improvement over the KJV *well favored kine*<sup>125</sup> and *fattleshed*. *Sleek* is two Hebrew words: the feminine plural adjective construct of *yâpheh* (הָפִי) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*], which means *fair, beautiful* and the masculine singular of *mar<sup>e</sup>eh* (מֵרְעֵה) [pronounced *mahr-EH*] and it means *appearance, form, sight*. Together, the two words are almost onomatopoeic, and almost the exact same description applied to Joseph not too far back (Gen. 39:6). Because this is God's Word, I must take it by faith that these cows were *beautiful in appearance* (although, possibly only to Mrs. Cow). However, these words together can mean *young, healthy, vigorous, good-looking* (i.e., for cows). *Healthy-looking* would be a good translation, inasmuch as both words would be represented fairly accurately. They are described with another two words: an adjective for fat (in the feminine plural construct) and the masculine singular of *flesh*. In the ancient world, *fat* was an adjective which was generally favorable; it represented prosperity. I have opted to translate the thought here somewhat updated rather than the actual words: *well-fed* is what I chose to better convey what is here.

The other cows are also described in a similar fashion: an adjective in the feminine plural construct followed by a masculine singular noun, a conjunction and another adjective in the feminine plural construct followed by a masculine singular noun. The first adjective is our word for evil; however, in the feminine, we saw that its meaning was toned down considerably to *bad, unpleasant, unfavorable*. The masculine singular noun which follows it is the same as used with the other seven cows: *mareh, or appearance*. So they were *unattractive in appearance, or unhealthy-looking*. The second set of words also parallel the second set of words describing the other cows. The first word is *daq* (דַּק) [pronounced *dak*] and it means *small, thin, frail*. It is attached again to the masculine singular of *flesh*. A good one-word translation is *malnourished*.

**Then he fell asleep and dreamed a second time and saw seven ears of grain were growing on one stalk, plump and good, and then saw seven ears frail and blighted by the east wind sprouting up after them and the frail ears swallowed the seven ears [which were] plump and good; then Pharaoh awoke and, he saw that it was a dream. [Gen. 41:5–7]**

The seven ears are onomatopoeic also; in the Hebrew it is *shib-AW shib-BO-leth*, or seven ears [of grain]. The first seven ears are described by the Hebrew words: *bârîy'* (אֵיבָ) [pronounced *baw-REE*], the same word used of the cows meaning *fat, healthy, plump*. and the feminine plural adjective *ṭôwb* (טוֹב) [pronounced *tobe*] and it means *good*, with a variety of applications.

The second ears of grain were *thin* (a word also used of the second seven cows) and looked as though the wind had been on them all their lives.

The word *behold* is anachronistic. It might be better translated, as *he saw* or something similar to that. It was an idiom which worked well from the time this was written down to the KJV, but it has completely fallen out of contemporary speech except in the way to say *see this, or observe*.

### The Chief Cupbearer Remembers Joseph

<sup>125</sup> A *kine* is a cow

**So it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled and he sent and called for all the occult figures of Egypt and all its wise men and Pharaoh told them his dreams<sup>126</sup>, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh. [Gen. 41:8]**

This is the first use of the word *char<sup>ע</sup>ûôm* (חַרְוֹם) [pronounced *khahr-TOHM*] and it literally means *engraver, writer*. It is used for one who possesses knowledge of the occult, which will be more obvious in Ex. 8 & 9. The NASB in the margin calls them soothsayer priests (or, prophesying heathen priests). Freeman explains the connection. These were an order of Egyptian priests who understood the sacred hieroglyphic writings. They were thought to be learned in the arts and sciences, they predicted the future, they explained dreams and there was an aura of mystery attached to them (as any practitioner of the black arts would try to cultivate). When one required information outside the ordinary range of knowledge, as one might contact a medium or a palm reader today, they were the ones to be consulted. In those days, they were revered, unlike those who practice a similar craft today are seen by most as the charlatans that they are (their personal sincerity does not improve their position). This same term will be used in Ex. 7:11, 22 and will be applied to a similar group in Babylon in Dan. 1:20 2:2.

Pharaoh also called for the *châkâm* (חָכָם) [pronounced *chaw-KAWM*] an adjective which means *wise, prudent, crafty, skillful*, and is used as a substantive.

Those of us who have read this passage before or have heard it before might think that the explanation of the meaning of the dream is fairly simple and obvious; however, God saw to it that the minds of the occult figures and the wise men were too clouded to properly interpret these dreams.

**Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, saying, "My faults [or, sins] I remember today. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and placed them<sup>127</sup> in the custody in the house of the captain of the bodyguard; me and the chief baker, we dreamed a dream on the same night [lit., one night], he and I; we each dreamed according to the meaning of his own dream [that] we dreamed." [Gen. 41:9–11]**

The chief cupbearer is not saying that he and the chief baker dreamed the same dream; they dreamed similar dreams on the same night, were similarly affected; but the meanings or interpretations of the dreams were personal.

**And there with us a young Hebrew, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard; and when we told him our dreams, he interpreted to us to each man according to his dream giving an interpretation. [Gen. 41:12]**

By young, Joseph is age 28 (see Gen. 41:46). Here we have a man, the chief cupbearer, whose duty it was to know who certain people were and to tell the king of Egypt who these people are when he meets them. He is right there next to the Pharaoh whispering the name, the duties and circumstances of their last meeting—everything to make the Pharaoh seem as though he has everything at the forefront of his mind; and this man for two years forgot who Joseph was, the one who predicted that he would be released from prison.

**"Furthermore, it was as he interpreted to us: so it came to pass I was restored to my office [lit., place] and him, the chief baker, was hanged." [Gen. 41:13]**

As many translators, I have taken great liberties with the translation of v. 13. It should read, *it came to pass that he restored me to my place and the chief baker, he hanged*. Both verbs are in the perfect 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, the first one being in the Hiphil with a 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix and the second is in a Qal 3<sup>rd</sup> person suffix. Joseph did not literally do the hanging or the reinstating—he predicted these things would occur. To make this clear, when the first verb is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person and has a 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix, then it means *he* is the subject of the verb and the verb

<sup>126</sup> Owen has this in the singular and Rotherham as plural, with the additional note that it should be in the plural; I tend to go with Rotherham when there is disagreement between the two

<sup>127</sup> As previous footnote; this is the reading of the Western Samaritan text and the Septuagint

acts upon whoever is speaking (in this case, the chief cupbearer). This is a metonymy where the action is put in place of the declaration of the action. This particular metonymy is used over a dozen times in the Old Testament (Gen. 2:7 27:37 30:13 34:12 35:12 etc.; see pp. 571–74 of Bullinger's *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*).

You would think that such a momentous event would have stayed in the forefront of the chief cupbearers mind, but God saw to it that he did not remember this. God had a plan for Joseph and that plan included him waiting for two years in a dungeon, learning to depend upon God. He had a ministry in the dungeon, and, as we have seen, he was not shy about revealing his faith in Yahweh. Those who came into contact with Joseph knew him to be an honorable man with high standards, great intelligence and capabilities. His weakness was not anything that anyone else would even recognize other than God and several of those who read this passage millennia later.

### Joseph Interprets the Dreams of Pharaoh

**Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and once he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh.** [Gen. 41:14]

Joseph is let out of jail, but he does not rush in to see the Pharaoh. There is a proper protocol which he recognizes. He has been in prison for some time; he has a long beard; he is dirty, wearing prison attire (or wearing pretty much the same set of clothes for the past 2+ years. He is not trying to snow the Pharaoh, but he does understand that you do not go before the leader of the land dirty, unshaven in old clothes. I believe that the Egyptians were clean-shaven (we have numerous wall portraits of clean-shaven Egyptians and of Egyptian barbers), and that Joseph did not intend to be offensive. The Egyptians would allow their beards to grow when they were in mourning, whereas the Jews would shave theirs when in mourning. There is not a right or wrong when it comes to grooming in this respect; just a difference of culture. Joseph could, under the law of liberty, keep his beard. However, under the law of expediency, he shaves his beard, so that he might be all things to all men. Paul explains this concept in 1Cor. 8. Furthermore, Joseph does not know what the dream is; he does not want to have to bring to Pharaoh horrible news and then stand there in front of Pharaoh like some ragamuffin waif for Pharaoh to vent his frustration on.

**Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream and there is no one who can interpret it and I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it." Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me [lit., apart from me]; God will give a complete answer [lit., of completeness] to Pharaoh."** [Gen. 41:15–16]

Joseph has been speaking to Pharaoh for less than two minutes and he explains that God is the interpreter of dreams. According to Owen and the NASB, God will give to Pharaoh a *favorable answer*. Joseph doesn't know that. Joseph doesn't know what the dream is nor does he have any idea as to how favorable the interpretation will be. In the KJV, it is *an answer of peace*. Joseph doesn't know that. Possibly it is a dream which is warning Pharaoh of an impending attack by a foreign power. What Joseph does know is that God will deliver to Pharaoh an accurate and complete interpretation of the dream. The word is *shâlôwm* (שָׁלוֹם), which does mean *peace*, *prosperity*, etc. However, it also means *completeness*, *soundness*.

Notice that Joseph immediately turns the spotlight off of himself and allows the glory of God to shine through. We are too often ones to take the glory for what has been accomplished, even the what has been accomplished is purely a spiritual matter. Joseph has done nothing yet, he doesn't know the dream, doesn't even know if he knows its interpretation, and yet tells Pharaoh that God will accurately interpret this dream for him.

**Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "You see in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile and I saw out of the Nile come seven cows, healthy-looking and well-fed, and they fed in the reed grass. Then I saw seven other comes come up after them; weakly and very unhealthy-looking—and emaciated. I had never seen such as the like of them in all the land of Egypt of [such] poor quality."** [Gen. 41:17–19]

Notice that the details are the same, but Pharaoh has embellished this story somewhat. There are two possible reasons for this. When he spoke to the chief cupbearer, he told him the dream immediately as he awoke and was shook up; but he had time to ruminate on the details in waiting for Joseph. Also, Joseph, the author, was present during the second explanation of the dreams and not during the first, so the detail will be greater for the second explanation.

**"And the emaciated and puny cows ate up the first, well-fed cows; however, [even though] they passed into their stomachs, no one would know that they had eaten them because their appearance was as emaciated as at the beginning; then I awoke." [Gen. 41:20–21]**

Again, we have more detail, as we would expect from the author. If this was strictly orally passed on, there would be no reason for the dreams to differ this much in detail. Or, instead of hearing embellishments the second time around, we would have been given even fewer details (e.g., and Pharaoh told his dreams to Joseph). However, since this was recorded by Joseph, the details are where we would expect them to be.

**I also saw in my dream: there were seven ears of grain growing on one stalk, full and good, and then seven withered and thin ears of grain blighted by the east wind sprouted after them and the thin ears swallowed up the good ears; furthermore, I told [this] to the occultists but there was no one who could explain it to me." [Gen. 41:22–24]**

An interesting change here. He told Joseph about the occult members who were there but did not mention the wise men. I don't have an explanation for this.

**Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream of Pharaoh it [is] one [dream]. What God is about to do, He has revealed to Pharaoh." [Gen. 41:25]**

There are people who are confused about the Trinity, yet have no problem understanding this verse. Pharaoh had two dreams, yet they are one—they deal with exactly the same events. God is three in person, one in essence and in complete unity with the other members of the Godhead. The dream is two in number, but one in essence; God is three in number, one in essence. Certainly, things are a bit more complicated than that, but that is the basic explanation of it.

**The seven good cows are seven years and the seven good ears are seven years; the dream is one [in essence]. The seven sickly-looking and emaciated cows that came up after them are seven years and the seven empty ears of grain blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is as I told to Pharaoh—what God is about to do, He has shown to Pharaoh." [Gen. 41:26–28]**

Joseph has been speaking to Pharaoh for perhaps five minutes and he has mentioned God and God's actions in the life of Pharaoh three times. The interpretation belongs to God. God has revealed to Pharaoh what God is about to do. Joseph centered in on Jesus Christ, the God of the universe. Nowhere does he exalt himself. Joseph has become occupied with Jesus Christ. It took his being incarcerated for several years and there are times when we must be under pressure in order to become occupied with Jesus Christ. From this point on in Joseph's life, he can just about do no wrong; and his place in Jewish and Egyptian history is central, so he cannot afford mistakes.

**"You will see seven years come of great prosperity in the land of Egypt; but there will arise seven years of famine after them and all the prosperity will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land." [Gen. 41:29–30]**

We have an obvious metonymy here where the word *land* actually refers to the *inhabitants of the land*. A land cannot be destroyed or consumed by famine; however, the people are.

The seven emaciated cows eating up the seven healthy cows is just exactly what happens when a national depression comes over the land. We experienced the same thing in the United States at the end of the 20's and into the 30's. We have several years of tremendous prosperity and suddenly, the bottom fell out, and we fell into a depression such as we had never known before. Men who had great wealth and prosperity, whose every day in the 1920's brought them great deal wealth, committed suicide during the great depression. Their prosperity did not carry them even two or three years into the depression. No matter how great the prosperity, adversity wipes it out entirely.

**"Prosperity will be unknown in the land because the famine which will follow, because it will be very grievous. Furthermore, the doubling of the dream of Pharaoh—two times—[means] that this is fixed by God and God will shortly bring it to pass."** [Gen. 41:31–32]

Recall that by the mouth of two or three witnesses shall everything be confirmed; here we have two dreams, both saying the same thing, indicating that this is not a future option depending upon what Pharaoh or depending upon what Egypt does, but these things will come to pass. What is left open to Pharaoh is what will he do, seeing that this is all going to occur.

Because of the small amount of rain which Egypt receives, droughts, which lead to agrarian depressions, are well-attested to. Only the very edge of the northern coast receives over ten inches of rain a year and most of Egypt receives between 2-4 inches of rain per year. This means that a very small change in the weather can reek havoc on the economy of Egypt, particularly ancient Egypt where agriculture was essential to their well-being. Early in the third millennium B.C. (could this be a mistake in Keller's book? Shouldn't this be the beginning of the third century B.C.? This was found in a rock inscription of the Ptolemies, who are of the latter era), there was a seven-year famine where we have preserved a message from King Zoser to a governor at Elaphantine: "I am very concerned about the people in the palace. My heart is heavy over the calamitous failure of the Nile floods for the past seven years. There is little fruit; vegetables are in short supply; there is a shortage of food generally. Everybody robs his neighbour...Children weep, young folk slouch around. The aged are depressed, they have no power in their legs, they sit on the ground. The court is at its wits' end. The storehouses have been opened but everything that was in them has been consumed."<sup>128</sup>

### Joseph's Advice to Pharaoh

**"Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning [or, one who has received understanding] and skillful [in the administration of policy] man and let him set him over the land of Egypt."** [Gen. 41:33]

Joseph does not only interpret Pharaoh's dreams, but he tells Pharaoh how to solve this coming problem. The man that Pharaoh selects should be *bîyn* (בִּינ) [pronounced *bean*] and it means *discerning, to be able to distinguish or to separate mentally, to be understanding*. It is in the Niphal participle, meaning that this is passive continuous action; further, the participle allows the verb to act as an adjective. In this case, the subject has **received** the ability to discern, to think, to reason, to be able to separate the important from the trivial, the necessary from the unimportant, what is correct from what is evil. This perceptive ability comes from God (Dan. 1:17) which we can pray for (Psalm 119:34).

This chosen man should also be *châkâm* (חָכָם) [pronounced *chaw-KHAWM*] and it means *to be wise, skillful (this can be in the administration of affairs), prudent, or crafty and cunning*. Joseph tells Pharaoh that he needs a man who has discernment and understanding from God but also has the ability to put his plans into action. It is possible to be exceptionally brilliant and not have enough sense to come out of the rain.

**Application:** I once recall a MENSA member tell me how he got pulled out of a bar by a policeman who required his identification. This MENSA member was bright enough to know the law and to know that he did not have to

<sup>128</sup> Werner Keller's *The Bible as History* p. 102

produce his driver's license under these circumstances, so he gave him a record club membership card with his name on it. This pretty much set the tone for their working relationship. This act, along with several others, resulted in him being taken to jail on a charge which he easily beat in court; however, this cost him several hundred dollars and several hours in jail. Here is a man who is exceptionally brilliant and lacks the common sense to keep himself out of jail. A man who is biyn and chakam would recognize then when dealing with a policeman, the utmost courtesy and respect is required and what was an unpleasant several hour ordeal could have been reduced to a few minutes of questioning.

On the other hand, a person could be brilliant when it comes to the administration of political decisions and with the intricacies of human behavior in political situations, but not have the intelligence to know what the overall policy or the political objectives should be. This aptly describes some long-term congressmen who can get the job done, no matter what that job is; they just have lost their ability to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad, and each piece of legislation is designed to win votes or to appease an interest group. For what is required under these circumstances, a man with both qualities is necessary.

**"Let Pharaoh proceed and let him appoint overseers over the land and take the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plenteous years and let them gather all the food of the good years—these that are coming—and [continue to] store [in protected storage] the grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities and let them guard it." [Gen. 41:34–35]**

We have found traces of ancient granaries in Egypt and in some of the tombs there are small clay models of these grain storehouses, which is possibly their way of providing for the dead during years of agrarian depression.

Joseph continues with his advice. This is a serious problem and Joseph knows how it can be solved. He is the discerning man with the ability to do the job properly. What is occurring is that he is telling Pharaoh to tax the people under these circumstances, an additional 20%, over and above what is already taken in. Once they gather the food, they are supposed to shâmar it (שמר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*]. This means literally *to set up a hedge around it*. By application, it means *to protect and to guard*. Implied is that it must be stored. Those who are guarding this grain are doing so under the authority of Pharaoh. This word is used twice, first in the Qal imperfect and then in the Qal perfect. The first time it is used, they are in the process of gathering the grain for seven years; the second time it is used, they are guarding the grain which has been stored. Notice that Joseph's instructions are very explicit. He tells what kind of person should oversee these procedure; he explains to Pharaoh exactly how much grain must be gathered and stored and that it must be properly stored, under lock and key and under guard.

A depression can bring out both the best and worst in people. This amount of grain has to be carefully gathered and protected against food riots and irrational behavior on the part of the population. We will see in a later verse that this is not Communism which is being advocated, but simple taxation. The wealth will not be redistributed, and everyone is paying a flat tax.

**"That food will be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine which will come to pass in the land of Egypt so that the land will not perish through the famine." [Gen. 41:36]**

Joseph is amazing. He has just interpreted the Pharaoh's dream and within seconds has told him how to solve the coming disaster. There are very few people who have this ability to recognize a problem and then see how it should be solved. I grew up in the 60's when people were great at finding faults in others and seeing problems in our system of government, but they were blind to their own inadequacies and had no real solutions; just slogans and a fervent desire to pursue their hedonistic ways.

There is an implication that should be covered here, which is ignored by some. The government has a right to tax the people and there is nothing Biblical about withholding taxes from the government.

## Taxes in the Bible

14. Joseph recommends that the Pharaoh levy an additional 20% tax here (Gen. 41:34–35)
15. Israel paid taxes as designated by God in the Mosaic Law (Num. 18:26–30 Deut. 14:28–29 26:12–13). 10% was for the government of Israel; 10% went to the Levites and then 10% was collected for the poor every 3 years. So they were essentially taxed 13.33% and required to give 10% *to the church*, as it were. Now, that was under a Mosaic economy. Today, we give as God has blessed us.
16. Jesus Christ taught that we should pay taxes in Matt. 22:15–21
17. Paul taught that we are to pay our proper share of taxes in Rom. 13:5–7

No justification is ever given in the Bible to not pay your taxes.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**This proposal [lit., word] seemed good to [lit., in the sight of] Pharaoh and to all his servants.**  
[Gen. 41:37]

This Pharaoh was a reasonable man. He was sincerely troubled by these dreams and was reassured by Joseph's demeanor, confidence and advice. He recognized Joseph's abilities in Joseph's presentation of his interpretation.

### Joseph Is Elevated to Second-in-command over All of Egypt

**Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"**  
[Gen. 41:38]

Notice that Joseph's witness has taken root in Pharaoh. He recognizes that a man to oversee such a project must be a man of God. This is something our own government could use—mature believers in Jesus Christ in power making legislative and judicial decisions. This is not a call for any candidate who calls himself a Christian candidate. Just as there are perhaps 1 in 20 Christians that even have a clue as to how to conduct their lives with a view toward God; the same is true of Christian candidates for public office (if the percentage is even that high). Examine if you will the land of Egypt at this time—how many people could assume this position? There is only one: Joseph.

**Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none as discerning and as prudent as you are. You will be over my house and to your mandates [lit., mouth] shall yield<sup>129</sup> all my people; only in regards to the throne will I be greater than you."** [Gen. 41:39–40]

This Pharaoh of Egypt himself is quite discerning and intelligent and lacking in prejudice. He is a tremendous administrator who does not have to have his hand in everything which is done. It is an art to delegate responsibility and then to have faith in those to whom you delegate this responsibility. Pharaoh recognizes Joseph's abilities and his relationship to God; Pharaoh sees that not only could Joseph interpret his dream but in seconds, give to Pharaoh a game plan to solve this problem which was predicted. Even though every country prefers its own people and is prejudice toward those from without, this Pharaoh is able to rise above these preconceived notions and chose what is best for Egypt. It is unlikely that Pharaoh made this decision entirely on the spot (although some people function like that). From the time that Joseph was contacted at the jail and got himself cleaned up and presentable, Pharaoh certainly did a background check on Joseph. He had heard the witness of his highly trusted chief cupbearer; he finds out that for all intents and purposes, Joseph was the chief administrator at the prison in which he was incarcerated.

<sup>129</sup> This word literally means *kiss*; I don't know if this was miscopied or whether this is what is supposed to be here; it may be an Egyptian word which sounds like or is written like *to kiss*. Joseph does use the same word in Gen. 45:15 48:10 and 50:1. Bullinger says that this is a metonymy where *kiss* stands for *being ruled over* and quotes Psalm 2:12. It is possible that we simply have a Hebrew word which can mean two different things. That is not unusual in Hebrew or in English

When Pharaoh turned to his own servants and inquired "Can we find such a man in whom is the Spirit of God?", he had already made up his mind. It was a rhetorical question to a certain degree; knowing that when he asked it, no one's name would come to the forefront. He had his mind made up, yet he consults those below him for suggestions. The process here is a little hard to understand and is often misread. He has included his cabinet in the decision making process, even though he has already made the decision. He is not patronizing them, but would take real suggestions under advisement. He would prefer that someone name Joseph. However, since no one does, and since no one offers the name of another statesman who is capable of assuming this authority and administering this plan, Pharaoh names Joseph.

**And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Observe, I have placed you over all the land of Egypt."**

[Gen. 41:41]

In Western society, we are in more of a caste system than would be true in those days in Eastern society. It was not unheard of to be a slave one day and rise to great power the next. According to Freeman, many prominent characters in Oriental history were slaves at one time. Because of our own peculiar history, we in the United States view slavery as the ultimate in degradation. This is not divine viewpoint. It is not unlike working for a living and some people became slaves voluntarily (Jacob essentially became Laban's indentured servant in order to gain the hand of Rachel—this was a sign of great love and honor; not of degradation).

**Application:** In a similar fashion, because obtaining a college education has been overemphasized in the United States, some vocations are seen as degrading. This again is not divine viewpoint but an aberration of our culture. It is proper and good to work for a living and no matter what we personally view as a low social position, the Biblical perspective is that we are all to work and we are never to look down our noses at others because of their vocation. This particularly includes the most honorable position of a housewife. A family wherein the woman works within the home is a family who has sacrificed to properly raise their children.

**Application:** It is a mistake to allow day-care to raise your children so that you can live in a more expensive house and bribe your children when they get older because you neglected to raise them properly when they were younger. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with those who work in day-care because that is an absolute necessity for approximately 5–10% of the people who use it. However, a majority of people who allow others to raise their children do so out of greed and not out of necessity.

**Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand and arrayed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.** [Gen. 41:42]

All of these things done square with what we know about Egypt. We have Egyptian artists who have portrayed this solemn ceremony of promoting a man to Grand Vizier (or to the office of Viceroy) in murals. The honored one is given the insignia of his office, then a ring, and an expensive suit of linen clothes to go with it. On the ring is the Pharaoh's seal which Joseph uses as a confirmation of his authority on any documents or mandates that he issues. The impression made by this signet ring carries the same validity as a notarized signature does in our society. This is a transfer of royal authority to Joseph. In Esther 3:10–12, the document Haman *signed* using the signet ring of Ahasuerus carried with it all the authority of Ahasuerus (see also Esther 8:2–10). The gold chain is an overt designation of merit or a decoration; and Joseph's authority is confirmed by it. Traditional court dress were expensive clothes of linen interwoven with threads of cotton.

The timing of these recorded ceremonies do not match the time of Joseph's rule; but then the historical documentation from Joseph's time is quite scarce. It is certain that every few decades the ceremonies changed somewhat as we go from Pharaoh to Pharaoh, as some would make such presentations based upon precedence and others would devise their own ceremonies.

**And he made him to ride in his second chariot and one<sup>130</sup> called out before him, "Kneel!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.** [Gen. 41:43]

---

<sup>130</sup> This is the plural *they* in *textus receptus*; the singular *one* in the Western Samaritan text, Septuagint and the Syriac Version



Riding in the second chariot establishes Joseph to the populace as second in command. In this verse we have one of the few truly Egyptian words in the Old Testament. It is likely an imperative and various people have translated it *kneel, bow the knee, give attention, prostrate yourself, your command is our desire, grand vizier (an Egyptian title), head of the wise, and tender father*. In the Hebrew the word is 'ab<sup>e</sup>rêk (אֲבֵרֶךְ) [pronounced *ahb-RAKE*]. It is doubtful that anyone has a clue as to how to pronounce this word and its meaning is also difficult to ascertain. For every Hebrew linguist who has written anything about the Hebrew language, we have a different meaning. Most of these ideas given here are probably correct.

My guess is that Joseph wrote the transliteration of this word because it was a title of sorts, his own title, as a matter of fact, which implied that the citizens of Egypt were to kneel or to give attention to Joseph. I suspect that whenever we recover more information from this era that this word will crop up. There is an Egyptian title which is quite similar: abarakku. Since the vowel points are not inspired, the only problem is the doubling of the *k*. In Hebrew, a doubling of the *k* would be כּ instead of כ. The dagesh (that little dot in the middle of the letters) often doubles the letter.

**Furthermore, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh and without your consent no man shall lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." [Gen. 41:44]**

Joseph is given in the past couple of verses great power in the land of Egypt. He is the number two man in Egypt with great authority and great responsibility. He received extensive training under Potiphar and as coordinator of the prison. Unfortunately, we do not have any corroborating evidence from Egyptian history concerning this great power held by a non-Egyptian. Whatever historical records that there were, they were lost or destroyed early on. We read in Ex. 1:8 that there arose a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. This was a few hundred years later. The Egyptians were known to keep meticulous records which is why archeologists, who reject God's Word (as we would expect unbelievers to do) seize the next best historical documents, which were those produced by the Egyptians. No other country from this ancient east has kept a record of their history quite as accurately and as detailed as has Egypt (except for, of course, Israel). We can go back to 3000 B.C. and trace the names of the Pharaohs almost without a break. We know their rulers, the acts of their rulers, the important events which shaped Egypt, and we have even their literary endeavors. We know, for instance, that Joseph's rule as a Semitic is not unprecedented. There are records of Semitic kings over Egypt during the 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty (Joseph ruled likely near the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty).

However, during the time of Joseph, we have no documents, no monuments—not just about him but about all of Egypt. Our archeological discoveries are blacked out somewhere between 1730 and 1580 B.C. Joseph ruled in Egypt around the mid-1800's B.C., What happened was that the Hyksos, which means *rulers of foreign lands*, invaded Egypt, huge numbers of them in chariots, and conquered Egypt, which was just about unthinkable to the Egyptians, since this had never happened before. There is some dispute as to whether this was a large scale invasion as described by Josephus or whether it was an internal coup. However, ancient history records these men as vicious, bloodthirsty conquerors from Semitic tribes from Canaan and Syria who caused the 1300 year rule of the Middle Kingdom of the Pharaohs to come to an abrupt end. This is very likely how the immediate records of Joseph's reign were purged (along with anyone else from recent memory) and how it came to be that a Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. That would be a Hyksos ruler who came into power perhaps a century after Joseph.

We do have a quote from an Egyptian historian, Manetho<sup>131</sup> (305-285 B.C.), which I took from Werner Kelly's *The Bible as History*: "We had a king called Tutimaeus. In his reign, it happened. I do not know why God was displeased with us. Unexpectedly from the regions of the East, came men of unknown race. Confident of victory, they marched against our land. By force, they took it, easily, without a single battle. Having overpowered our rulers they burned our cities without compassion, and destroyed the temples of the gods. All the natives were treated with great cruelty for they slew some and carried off the wives and children of others into slavery. Finally, they appointed one of themselves as king. His name was Salitis and he lived in Memphis and made Upper and Lower Egypt pay tribute to him, and set

<sup>131</sup> It was Manetho who wrote an entire history of Egypt and divided the kings into 30 dynasties (which he later revised into 31); he further grouped these dynasties into kingdoms, a historical custom that we follow even today

up garrisons in places which would be most useful to him...and when he found a city in the province of Saïs which suited his purpose (it lay east of the Bubastite branch of the Nile and was called Avaris<sup>132</sup>) he rebuilt it and made it very strong by erecting walls and installing a force of 240,000 men to hold it. Salitis went there every summer partly to collect his corn and pay his men their wages, and partly to train his armed troops and terrify foreigners."

The Hyksos seemed to make very few changes in the way that things were set up administratively in Egypt, even adapting the Egyptian designation of *son of Re*.<sup>133</sup> The very little history which we have of these kings include a very few monuments in Khayan and Apophis, where there are a few statues and building fragments, and some princes are known only from scarab amulets.

It is equally likely that Joseph ruled under a Hyksos ruler (who would be less inclined to be prejudice against non-Egyptians) and riding around in war chariots was presumably unknown prior to the invasion of the Hyksos, who popularized this. Or it is possible the Hyksos conquered Egypt shortly after Joseph's death. The Hyksos were finally expelled circa 1540 B.C., which probably did not precede the eleventh year of Ahmose I, 100 years prior to the Exodus. Werner Keller leans heavily toward this position. We continually find Semitic names who were officials during the Hyksos period, including one name that we have found on a scarab dating from that time, Jacob-Her. He further cites that while the Egyptians were quite prejudice against those who kept and bred small cattle (see Gen. 46:34), the Hyksos were not so heartily predisposed. Our primary difficulty with this position is the timing—our estimation of Joseph's era and of the times of the Hyksos varies by a few hundred years.

In modern Egypt, in the town of Medinet-el-Faiyûm, 80 miles south of Cairo, there is a man-made canal called *Bahr Yusuf*, which means *Joseph's canal*, the canal whose planning and building is attributed to Joseph by tradition. It is this 200 mile long canal, which diverts water from the Nile to this otherwise dry area, which has allowed for this area to be an oasis of oranges, mandarins, peaches, olives, pomegranates and grapes.

**Then Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, the priest of On, to wife. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.** [Gen. 41:45]

Joseph certainly received an Egyptian name and as far as can be determined, that name means *the God speaks and He lives*. Every lexicon spells it differently when transliterating it into the English. In the Hebrew, it has come down to us as Tsâph<sup>e</sup>nath-Pa<sup>e</sup>nêach (צִפְנָת-פַּנְחָא) [pronounced *tsof-NATH-pahġ-NAY-ahkh*] but every lexicon will give a different pronunciation. It is an Egyptian word, ending in a vowel as the last one did that we examined. Of course this word is found only here and we are transliterating into the English what Joseph transliterated into the Hebrew what Scribes have pronounced in a certain fashion for millenniums before vowel points were been added. I believe that Thieme translates this name *Interpreter of Dreams* or *Secret Revealer*.

On is a city called Heliopolis by the LXX which the Israelites are later credited as having built (obviously, this would have been a settlement or a city in Joseph's day and, during their slavery, the Jews went to On and rebuilt the city). It is located fairly close to the modern day Heliopolis and also to Cairo. This city is remembered for being a center of worship of Re, the sun-god. However, knowing that Joseph is spiritually mature, it is very certain that his wife and likely his in-laws were all believers in Jesus Christ (as was Pharaoh). It is highly unlikely that Joseph would do so many things right and marry the wrong person. His progeny being listed as two tribes seems to indicate that all was well with his children spiritually speaking. Furthermore, Jewish tradition has it that she converted to belief in Yahweh.

Scofield sets up an interesting analogy between Joseph and his bride and Christ and His bride the church. Both Jesus Christ and Joseph were rejected by their brothers. They called out from the world their wives; the church became made up principally of Gentiles and Asenath was a Gentile. God will preserve Israel and Joseph will preserve his brothers through times of great turmoil.

<sup>132</sup> Avaris was later called Per-Ramesses and is one of the bond cities of Israel in Egypt (see Ex. 1:11)

<sup>133</sup> Queen Hapshepsut remarked that they ruled without Re; but that is a remark borne either of prejudice, or she recognized that they were not truly devoted to Re, the sun god, but used the name for political gain

We do not know the age of Pharaoh or how his throne was ascended to after his death. Joseph, in this endeavor, did all of the planning and all of the foot-work, whereas the Pharaoh remained at home in the capital city. In order for Joseph to put his plan into action, his authority would undermine the authority of the provincial nobles. For this reason, Zodiates places Joseph under Pharaoh Sesostris III.

**Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. So Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.** [Gen. 41:46]

It would be reasonable to ask *just what is going on here?* In the previous verse we were told that Joseph went throughout the land. Why is this repeated? The actual construction is almost the same word-for-word, tense for tense; what appears to have happened is that Joseph was writing this down and then stopped either at the end of v. 45 or after the first phrase in v. 46. Then, some months or even years later, he picked up the narrative and continued writing. It would not be surprising that this first portion was almost a day-by-day diary of his time in prison. However, when pressed into service, he did not have time to write down what occurred till sometime later. This is a guess on my part.

Recall that Joseph spent a great deal of time as a slave and then in prison. Would these have not been ideal circumstances for writing his own story? And Joseph would not have had to actually physically write his autobiography; he could have composed all of this in his head, perhaps over a period of time. But here, he is suddenly given a great deal of responsibility, where he is working all day long. So, that would have cut into his story-writing.

### Joseph Oversees During the Seven Years of Prosperity

**During the seven years of plenty, the earth brought forth abundantly [lit., by handfuls] and he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt and stored up food in the cities—the food of the fields of the city where around it he stored up in the midst of it. And Joseph stored up grain like the sand of the sea in great abundance until he ceased to measure for it could no longer be measured.** [Gen. 41:47–49]

The next several years were extremely busy ones for Joseph; he undertook the preservation of an entire nation during seven years of the worst depression that they were to ever see. Prior to that, he had to continually convince people wherever he happened to be that this was the law and that he knew what he was doing. When you change policy this radically, there is more to it than *this is the law, you will just have to follow it*. There is a lot which occurred that we will never know about in this life. Joseph perhaps faced great prejudice. One of the reasons that Pharaoh paraded him through the streets and conferred great authority upon him is that Pharaoh knew that he would need this great authority. This had to be unquestionably authorized by Pharaoh so that there would be no riots in Egypt over this additional taxation. Mobs are not known for their foresight and no one in their right mind likes paying additional taxes. However, due to Joseph's great diplomacy and the Pharaoh's complete support, they were able to continue to put away grain until it was beyond their ability to account for the amount of grain that they had set aside.

It is obvious that given enough time and manpower, the grain which Joseph had stored would have been measurable. However, what we have here is a figure of speech, called an hyperbole, where we have somewhat of an exaggeration. An hyperbole is used to indicate that there was a great deal of grain which was stored according to Joseph's orders.

### Joseph's Sons

**And prior to the year of famine to Joseph were born two sons, which Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, the priest of On, bore to him. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh, for God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house.** [Gen. 41:50–51]

M<sup>e</sup>nashsheh (מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה) [pronounced *mehn-ahsh-SHEH*] means *he who causes me to forget*. Joseph, although nothing has been said up until now, has been troubled because his own brothers sold him into slavery and he spent three years in jail for something which he did not do. Although he became heavily involved in his work, it was his own son who allowed him to place the past in the past.

**The name of the second he called Ephraim, for God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.** [Gen. 41:52]

ʿEph<sup>e</sup>rayim (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced *ef-RAH-yim*] means *doubly fruitful*, noting both his general prosperity in Egypt and also his prosperity at having two sons. Both of these sons were born to him during the seven years of prosperity, the first probably shortly after his marriage and the second perhaps a year or two later. So he had his sons between the ages of 30 and 33 (and certainly prior to age 37).

### Joseph Oversees During the Seven Years of Famine

**The seven years of prosperity that prevailed in Egypt came to an end...**[Gen. 41:53]

The information that we receive about Joseph's life during this time is very sketchy. It is likely that he spent a great deal of his life on the road, moving throughout the various established Egyptian cities, having the storehouses built, gathering grain, then entrusting certain men with the guarding of these granaries.

**...and began the seven years of famine, to come as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.** [Gen. 41:54]

We are under an agrarian society with a healthy amount of trading. We are certain that the land was much more fertile during those years, yet the lack of rain could cause them ruination. All of this was God's plan—none of it occurred as a surprise to Him. Although we see it as human suffering, the famine had many purposes:

#### The Famine and God's Plan

18. The famine glorified God because Joseph, a man of God, predicted this, clearly giving the credit for the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams to God
19. It caused Joseph's family to be put under pressure that they had to come to Egypt to find food (they were financially rich enough to afford to search it out)
20. This reunited Joseph with his family
21. This gave the Israelites a safe haven for the next four hundred years
22. This caused some serious attrition in the land of Canaan, so that it was not too overpopulated when the Jews return to the land (populations grow exponentially so that removing a portion of the population early on affects the overall population much more than removing a portion of it later)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

What follows is quite important for those who are concerned with politics. Joseph, the wisest man of his day, although he headed a strong government, this was not the first socialistic state policy. He did not collect all the wealth and then redistribute it to those in need. The gathering, storing and guarding of all this grain cost a tremendous amount of money. It had to be done—there was no other way to handle this situation—however, the grain was not given away freely. Joseph saw that a fair price was charged for it; a price which would allow the grain to last for seven years of famine. This required for the population to save up their money and to remain active in business throughout the famine. That is, they could not produce much in the way of food, so they had to continue to work in other areas in order to be able to afford the food.

**Then all the land of Egypt was famished. The people cried to Pharaoh for bread and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do." [Gen. 41:55]**

The Pharaoh of Egypt has never received the credit that he deserves. He recognized great wisdom and ability in Joseph and acted accordingly without prejudice. He placed all of Egypt under the authority of a foreigner, something which was almost unprecedented. Then, when Joseph's prediction comes true, Pharaoh does not take any of the credit and he continues to allow Joseph to administer the program. His population, when the latter rain does not come and all of their crops have died, are in a panic and come to Pharaoh in large and small groups asking what they can do in order to feed their families. Pharaoh refers them immediately to Joseph.

**So when the famine was over all of the land, Joseph opened [the granaries] all that was in them and he sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. [Gen. 41:56]**

This is an important bit of information—Joseph did not give the grain away. This would have caused a number of problems:

### Problems with Simply Giving the Grain Away

1. There would have been food riots with people rushing to the granaries to get all that they could
2. There would have been the hoarding of grain
3. The granaries would have been depleted too soon, had he given the food away
4. The people would have become lazy and indolent; seven years is a long time to receive food for free; this would have caused irreparable harm to the state of Egypt

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

So Joseph sold this grain which he had taken from the people through taxation. This kept the granaries filled, allowed the people to purchase grain as they needed it, and prevented the population from becoming a welfare state, something which in some areas of the United States, we are now paying the piper for.

By the way, I want you to notice something else: God does not come to Joseph in a dream and tell him, "What is wrong with you? Give this grain away to the poor." There is definitely a place for taking care of the poor and the helpless. There are those who are unable, through no fault of their own, to take care of themselves. Churches, private organizations, and even government should have a hand in this. However, what is problematic is when government begins to do all of the thinking and planning for its citizens. "You did not plan out for your future? Then we will take care of you." This is not what government ought to do.

The Jewish nation, about to be established through a series of laws, did not simply hand out food to the indigent. As we will study, farmers were not supposed to harvest their entire fields; they were to leave portions of their field unharvested so that the poor could come through later and harvest this for themselves. Now, this was work—no doubt about it—and much preferred over our system today.

Now, you may say, "It is more complicated than that—who lives next to a grain field anymore? At present, we have huge government conglomerates which hand out various benefits, and all the people have to do is come into the office, and they are given these benefits. In many cases, they only have to show up once or twice a year in order to get some of their benefits. Now, there has got to be something they can produce, something they can clean, something they can paint in exchange for these benefits. We need to carry over the principles of the Law into today's society.

**Moreover, all the land came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain because the famine was severe over all the land. [Gen. 41:57]**

Here the verse reads *over the entire earth* or *over the entire land*. The Hebrew word is the same, as we examined it when we studied the flood. Insofar as Egypt was concerned, this might as well have been the entire earth—it was the surrounding populations with which Egypt had political contact. This is a depression which extended into three continents. The obvious metonymy is that the physical *land or earth* does not come to Joseph, but the *inhabitants* of the land. Furthermore, this is where *all the earth* means *the greater portion of the population*; and most of this is via representation; that is, Jacob's family does not come in its entirety; a sampling of his family comes (albeit, a large sampling).

---



---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

### Addendum

An addendum might be important for some readers, listing the various rulers over Egypt and their approximate dates of reign. Whereas the scholars who believe that the story of Joseph is essentially factual reads like a *Who's Who of Egyptologists*<sup>134</sup>, there is quite a bit of disagreement over the details and the time period.

---

<sup>134</sup> Keller, p. 105

<b>The Egyptian Dynasties</b>	<b>B.C.</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
-------------------------------	-------------	------------------

Middle Kingdom (Eleventh and	T w e l f t h D y n a s t i e s )	2160–1580		
		1785–1680		
		1730–1580		
		1680–1580		
		1580–1090		
		1580–1314		
		1585–1558		
		1557–1539		
		1539–1520		
		1520–1484		
Second Intermediate Period			1504–1450	
Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties)			1450–1425	
			1425–1408	
		1408–1372		
Hyksos (Fifteenth and Sixteenth	D y n a s t i e s )	1372–1354		
		1353–1314		
		1314–1200		
		1314–1312		
		1312–1289		
		1290–1224		
		1224–1204		
		1200–1085		
The Seventeenth Dynasty		1198–1166		
The New Kingdom				
The Eighteenth Dynasty				
Ahmosis				
Amenophis I				
Thutmose I				
Thutmose II				
Hapshepsut				
Thutmose III				
Amenophis II				
Thutmose IV				
Amenophis III				
Amenophis IV (Akhenaton)				
Smenkhare				
Thut-Ankh-Amon				
Ai				
Haremhab				



Some tend to assume that the dates put together by historians are exceptionally accurate and that the Bible is a book of myths and stories which lacks the rigor of historical studies. In studying the inspiration of the Bible, we have seen that such is not necessarily the case. Furthermore, the information which historians use to hang dates upon is sparse and based upon personal prejudice. The documents that we base our historical information upon in history might be removed from the history they purport to record by several centuries; we might have one or two actual documents which are copies copied centuries after the original author wrote his own treatise. On the other hand, the Bible was written by eyewitnesses more often than not; we have more manuscripts of the Bible than any other historical document; and in areas where we can check for personal prejudice and exaggeration, the writers of Scripture seem to be remarkably objective, even when writing about their own lives.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---

**Genesis 42** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 42

### Genesis 42:1–38

#### Outline of the Chapter:

- Vv. 1–5      **Jacob's sons are sent to Egypt**
- Vv. 6–25   **Joseph and his brothers are reunited in Egypt**
- Vv. 26–35   **The brothers are sent home to retrieve Benjamin from home**
- Vv. 36–38   **Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go**

#### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- Introduction   **Why Does God Allow Great Disasters?**
- V.   8      **Why Joseph's Brothers Do Not Recognize Him**
- V.   20     **Why did Joseph change his mind?**

**Introduction:** In Gen. 42, we reunite Joseph with his brothers, although they will not recognize him (he does know who they are). The drought has gone throughout Egypt and the land of Canaan, and to many surrounding areas. This is a disaster brought on by God, but according to His perfect purpose.

We often have a difficult time with understanding human misery and suffering which is brought on by natural disaster. Anyone would be hard-pressed to explain each and every individual case, however, in general:

### Why Does God Allow Great Disasters?

1. Some of those affected by natural disaster are under divine discipline.
2. Some of those affected by natural disaster are under suffering for blessing.
3. God cannot reach some people except through personal misery and suffering—I personally had to be brought to a point of personal suffering before I would investigate the claims of Jesus Christ.
4. God allows some to witness through their unselfish aide to those in need during times of disaster.
5. God tests some people and their faith in Him through natural disaster.

Because of our own hard-heartedness, some people refuse to face God and the claims of Jesus Christ apart from suffering.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Jacob's Sons Are Sent to Egypt

**When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" Then he said, "Behold, I have heard that there was grain in Egypt; go down there and buy grain for us from there that we may live and not die." [Gen. 42:1–2]**

Had the book of Genesis been passed down from generation to generation as sort of a fable, then we would not expect it to lack detail in certain areas. Bear in mind that fifteen or so years have passed since we have heard anything about Jacob and his eleven sons. One would expect that we would have some information about them over these past twenty or so years. However, all we will have is sketchy information of their lives and conversations outside of Joseph's periphery; information would could be obtained through direct interview at a later time (which Joseph certainly did). The only portions of lives of his brothers which we know about which may have been coterminous with Joseph's time in Egypt are from Gen. 38; which we already examined.

With this first sentence, we know that the brothers are not taking huge flocks throughout the land; that they are mostly all living at home; that they are just sitting around getting hungry. Their lives over this first year of famine have become rather desperate.

In v. 2 we have a pleonasm—where more words are used that is needed in order to convey meaning. It is a figure of speech used for emphasis. When Jacob says *so that we may live and not die* he is emphasizing the dire straights in which they found themselves due to the depression.

**So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt [or, possibly, to buy corn from the Egyptians]. However, Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might befall him. [Gen. 42:3–4]**

Even though there are twelve sons of Joseph and twelve tribes of Israel, note that God the Holy Spirit does not give equal time to all twelve brothers in Genesis. Some of them we know only by name. It is just like the twelve disciples of our Lord Jesus—we know a lot about two or three Apostles, a little about five or six of them, and practically nothing about the rest. Even though this is the writing of Joseph, he is guided by God the Holy Spirit Who properly edits this material.

Jacob had a particular fondness for Joseph and Benjamin because they were his youngest sons and they were the sons of his right woman, Rachel, who had died. Whereas his favoritism is explainable and understandable, it should never have been revealed to the other sons. Not only had Jacob not learned from his mistakes, but he went from having some spiritual maturity and retrogressed into a bitter, self-centered, self-pitying old man. Therefore, he treats Benjamin differently from the other brothers. It will become clear, however, that they had adjusted to this, and accepted it as a part of life.

Notice that Benjamin is called Joseph's brother. The other sons of Jacob are actually half-brothers to Joseph and Benjamin, all having different mothers from them. However, Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother and therefore, Benjamin is called *Joseph's brother*.

### Joseph and His Brothers Are Reunited in Egypt

**Thus, the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came for the famine was in the land of Canaan. [Gen. 42:5]**

We are not given any details, other than there were a number of people who learned that there was grain to be bought in Egypt, and that Joseph's brothers were in a group who petitioned Joseph for food. They did not all travel together, but they did arrive together and awaited an audience with the second-in-command.

**Now Joseph, he was governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. So Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him, their faces to the ground. [Gen. 42:6]**

Joseph sold this grain—God the Holy Spirit tells us this three times (Gen. 41:56–57 42:6). There is no welfare here. The government did not collect this grain like a bank and then return it to the people. Joseph both sold it to the Egyptians and sold it to other countries. This brought great wealth into Egypt.

When Joseph's brothers saw him for the first time, he was introduced to them as royalty and using his Egyptian name rather than his Hebrew name. Consciously, they will not recognize Joseph; however, subconsciously, they will make a connection and some of the brothers will think about Joseph and feel guilty about what they did during this interview with the Grand Vizier.

**Joseph saw his brothers and knew them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke to them harshly. He said to them, "Where do you come from? And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." [Gen. 42:7]**

Joseph last saw his brothers when some of them were in their late twenties and thirties. There was not as much change physically in them. They all spoke Hebrew through an interpreter and he recognized their voices and recognized them as a group. He is speaking to them and has not yet decided what he is going to do. Since he was not recognized, Joseph pumps them for information concerning his brother and his father. Since he is not recognized, Joseph wants to make the most of this and yet keep his identity a secret.

**Thus Joseph knew his brothers but they did not know him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them and he said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see the weakness [lit., nakedness] of the land." [Gen. 42:8–9]**

When Joseph's brothers come to him to buy grain, they do not recognize him. Whereas, this has never caused me any problems, I have heard that some people cannot believe that all 10 brothers do not recognize Joseph. This is easy to explain.

### Why Joseph's Brothers Do Not Recognize Him

6. The brothers had no idea what had happened to Joseph; they did not know where he was taken by the traders, who they sold him to, or if he was even alive. Most of them appear to have guilty consciences that trouble them for several years. Did any of them think that they would see Joseph again? That seems unlikely. Whether any of them might have expected to see Joseph when in Egypt again, we don't know. But, they would have expected a servant.
7. It seems likely that, in general, most of the brothers never expected to see Joseph again and did not look for him to appear.
8. Joseph spoke Egyptian before them, probably with very little accent (not that they would hear an accent), and his interpreter spoke to them.
9. They sold Joseph into slavery when he was a lad in his late teens or early twenties; he was now thirty-seven; people change a great deal during those years. His voice would have changed slightly (even more hidden since he did not speak to them in Hebrew) and his physical appearance would have changed a great deal.
10. Joseph wore Egyptian clothes, lived in a palace, had servants under him and had authority that these brothers could not even imagine. It would never occur to them that Joseph would be number two man in Egypt.
11. Joseph had an Egyptian name given to him by Pharaoh by which he was known and this is the name his brothers heard when they were brought to him.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Seeing his brothers bow before him, Joseph recalls his dreams concerning them from over a decade previous. We all have experiences, memories, thoughts and dreams which seem to stay with us all of our lives. I still recall dreams which I had when I was three and four years old. Those dreams of Joseph were from God and he retained his memory of them. By this time, Joseph has formulated a plan—he wants to spend more time with his brothers and he wants to see Benjamin and his father. He does not yet want to reveal his identity to them.

Weakness is the word *ʿerʿvâh* (הַרְוָה) [pronounced *ger-VAW*] and it literally means *nakedness*. It is a word primarily used of the female (land is in the feminine gender) and it refers to exposed, undefended portions of the land. It is only found here in this usage; however, the reason for that presumably is that this is a translation from the Egyptian tongue into the Hebrew.

**They said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. We are all the sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants are not spies." [Gen. 42:10–11]**

Suddenly, these ten brothers were thrown into a frenzy. The interpreter has just told them that Joseph accused them of being spies. They all begin speaking at once. One tells the interpreter "Tell him we only came to buy food." Another says, "Please tell him that we are honest men." Another says, "We are all the sons of one man." He said this to let Joseph know that they were not a surveillance detachment but ten brothers, which is why all ten of them are there together.

**Then he said to them, "No, it is the weakness of the land that you have come to see." And they said, "We twelve [are] your servants; we are brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. How, you see [lit., behold] the youngest [is] with our father this day and one is no more." [Gen. 42:12–13]**

Joseph is playing his role to the hilt while he decides exactly how he is going to put into action his plan. Their continuing to speak confirms in his mind that they are his brothers.

With a little guidance from a pastor-teacher, it is fairly easy to see when the Bible is to be taken literally and when it is not to be. Jacob's sons are not literally Joseph's servants. They do not literally cook his meals, sweep his floor, nor do they wash his laundry. This is an expression, common in those times; an expression of deference and respect. This is clearly an expression which is not to be taken literally. The times that we are to interpret something other than a literal meaning is generally very clear, as it is here.

**However, Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you—I said you are spies. Here is how you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you will not go from this place unless your younger brother comes here." [Gen. 42:14–15]**

Joseph has been going through his mind determining how he will get to see Benjamin without revealing his identity. He has not yet decided when he will reveal himself to his brothers or exactly what he will say. There are times when we should think before we speak and before we act. This is what Joseph is allowing himself to do. Recall that he has every reason in the world to take revenge upon his brothers. They were ready to kill him out of jealousy; out of their very limited kindness, they were going to sell him into slavery instead. Not much consolation. Had Joseph acted out of emotion, out of revenge, out of a pay-back mentality, his testimony to the Egyptians and to his family would have been worthless. His testimony before the angels would have been neutralized.

**"Send one of you and let him bring your brother while [the rest of] you remain in prison, that your words may be tested whether there is truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, you are certainly spies." [Gen. 42:16]**

Joseph's threat has to be believable and what he demands should seem reasonable to them. They have given him a story about a younger brother which would confirm that they are all brothers; this younger brother will bear a family resemblance to them all; therefore, his asking for Benjamin to come is a reasonable thing to ask and a reasonable test of their genuineness. He knows that they are genuine, but they do not know that; therefore, what he requests from them should seem reasonable to them. Joseph has not made any threats, but it would be my guess is that spying would be a capital offense punishable by death and the brothers would all be aware of this or at least suspect that it would be that.

**Then he put them together in prison for three days. Then Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and you will live. I fear God." [Gen. 42:17–18]**

When Joseph said, *do this and you will live*, both verbs are in the imperative mood. The latter verb in the imperative is called heterosis [pronounced *HET-e-roe-sis*] and it is the exchange of one form of speech for another. Where you would expect to find one mood (or one gender or one tense), you find a different mood (or gender, or tense). Here we would expect an indicative mood (such as, the imperfect tense) we find the imperative. Joseph, in ordering them to live, is emphasizing the importance of following his instructions.

Joseph made this proposal before they went into prison for three days—he gave them three days to think about it and he told them that he would get back to them in three days with a reasonable expectation. In any case, after three days, he came to them for an answer, allowing them time to think things over.

Joseph also says something quite unusual—something they did not expect to hear from an Egyptian ruler: "I fear God." In the Old Testament, *fear* covered a lot of ground. It meant *to have respect, to fear, to revere*. Fearing the One who had control over your destiny and knowing that you were a sinner deserving death is reasonable; not irrational. When you know Who and What God is; when you understand what you can of His character, then that fear is parlayed into reverence and respect. Those who claim that Jesus is their best friend treat our Lord with irreverence and disrespect. They need a healthy dose of fear to understand that He is the God of the Universe, the creator and sustainer of the universe. We should absolutely have a daily walk with Him and we should daily, evenly hourly, direct our prayers toward Him; but He deserves our respect, not our over-familiarity.

God, in this verse, is the word Elohim, the plural noun for the Godhead, for the Trinity, referring to the essence of God and God's character. The ten brothers, who undoubtedly had been mostly away from God, never expected to have an Egyptian noble witness to them.

**"If you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined in your prison [lit., the house of your prison] and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households. But your youngest brother, bring to me so your words will be verified and you will not die." And they did so. [Gen. 42:19–20]**

We know that Joseph at first, before they went into prison, told them that he would send one back for Benjamin and keep the rest. However, after thinking about it for three days, he decides to keep one and send the rest back together. Here I am willing to make some educated guesses as to why he changed his mind:

### Why did Joseph change his mind?

12. If he sent back one brother, he might die in the trip home, traveling all the way home with very little protection.
13. Jacob might not believe the story of just one son; nine of them telling him the same thing would convince him
14. Would all nine brothers risk their lives to return with Benjamin for their one brother or would they count themselves lucky that they were not the one left behind to die?

Bear in mind, Joseph has a particular goal here—to get Benjamin down to Egypt.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us and we would not listen. Therefore, this distress is come upon us." [Gen. 42:21]**

They did not recognize Joseph for several reasons, but he did bring back thoughts of what they had done to him. This is their subconscious minds operating. Their subconscious minds picked up enough information from talking

to Joseph (through an interpreter) that, although they did not recognize him, they began to all think about him and the wrong that they had done.

**Then Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, saying not to sin against the lad, but you would not listen. So now, see: his very blood it is required." [Gen. 42:22]**

As we recall, it was not Reuben who asserted his authority as the oldest, but it was Reuben who suggested that they put Joseph in the empty well and it was Judah who suggested that they sell Joseph rather than kill him; but Reuben did not take the proper stand and forbid the killing of Joseph. He did intend to later rescue Joseph from the well. He just had not gotten around to it by the time the Ishmaelite trading caravan discovered Joseph and sold him. However, what they did to Joseph has weighed heavily on their respective consciences for all these years.

His last sentence is stilted because he is upset. He begins with *waw* conjunction and the adverb *gam* (גַּם) [pronounced *gam*] and it is from an unused root which means *to gather*. It means *in addition to, also, moreover*. This is followed by the masculine singular Hebrew word for blood with a 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine suffix (meaning *his*). He ends with the Niphal participle of *dârash* (שָׁדַח) [pronounced *daw-RASH*], which means, in the passive, *required, sought*. The participle acts as a verbal adjective with continuous action. *So moreover, observe, his blood is being required*—would be pretty close to a literal, word-for-word translation. Reuben has told the brothers that he and they will pay for what they have done to Joseph; the implication being is that it is time to pay the piper now. This shows some understanding of God and how things work. No one gets away with anything—even in these days. We bear a responsibility for everything that we do.

**They did not know that Joseph understood for there was an interpreter between them. [Gen. 42:23]**

The brothers are discussing Joseph in their native Hebrew language and what they did to Joseph. They do not know this is Joseph in their midst, nor do they realize that he understands every word that they are saying. All this time Joseph would speak Egyptian to an interpreter and the interpreter would speak Hebrew to the sons of Jacob. It is possible that he learned from this conversation what was said while he was in the pit and they were some distance away discussing what they should do.

**The he turned away from them and wept and returned to them and spoke to them. So he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. [Gen. 42:24]**

The first question might be why did Joseph take Simeon? Logically, one would expect him to take Reuben, the eldest, as hostage. However, he could understand his brothers discussing in Hebrew and he realized that Reuben had stood up for him (he may have known this before). He knew by Simeon's voice and his cruel nature that Simeon was one of the instigators of Joseph's entrapment. Simeon, originally called for the murder of Joseph—or, very likely, Joseph heard his voice as the most vociferous of the ten, so he kept Simeon. Furthermore, Joseph may have thought it better to separate Simeon and Levi, as they tended to work each other up and become violent (Gen. 34). Although Reuben's attempt to rescue Joseph was half-hearted, it did not go unnoticed by Joseph, who let Reuben return with his brothers, yet kept Simeon as a hostage.

When Joseph began to speak with his brothers, he was probably uncertain as to what he should do and what he felt. After all this time, seeing that they had carried this guilt around and seeing that they were sorry for what they had done, and just seeing his family again after all of these years, Joseph had to excuse himself and cry because he was overcome with emotion. When he returns to them, with a flair for the dramatics, he ties Simeon up and allows the others to leave.

**The Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to replace their money each in his sack; then to give to them provisions for the journey. Thus [this] was done for them. [Gen. 42:25]**



We have two different kinds of containers here. Kēlîy (כֶּלִי) [pronounced *keh-EE*] means something which was man-made, as far as I can figure out, and is translated variously as *article, utensil, vessel, sack*. This is what the grain (or corn) was kept in. The other is saq (סַק) [pronounced *sak*] which is an open-weave sack which would not hold water, that they kept the food for their donkeys in.

Having not gone to Egypt before, the sons of Jacob had no idea that they would be so well taken care of. The money was placed in their sacks with the grain surreptitiously, but their trip provisions were given to them outright. Joseph desires to see his full brother and his father. It is his discretion how much he charges for the grain and he chose to give the grain to them free. They do not know this and will not find out until they arrive home.

### The Brothers Are Sent Home to Retrieve Benjamin from Home

**Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.** [Gen. 42:26]

The brothers brought the sacks; the sacks were filled by the granary workers, who also slipped their money back into the sacks; then the sons put the sacks on their donkeys. This and previous verses tell us that some traveling was done by camel and some was done by donkey during those days.

**And as one opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money—and he saw it was in the mouth of his sack.** [Gen. 42:27]

The brothers travel for some time and stop at a lodging place. They had their donkeys cared for back in Egypt but it was time to see to their needs again. Joseph is not there so he does not know which brother discovered this and by the time he sees them again, it is likely that most of them have forgotten. The next few verses were likely received via interview by Joseph of his brothers and father when they later returned to Egypt.

**And he said to his brothers, "My money has been put back—see [lit., behold], here [it is] in my sack." At this their hearts failed them and they turned trembling to one another saying, "What is this that God has done to us! [or, what now has God done to us?]"** [Gen. 42:28]

When it says *their hearts failed them*, the verb is the Qal imperfect of *yâtsâ'* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and it means *to go out*, but it is used in a variety of ways. So literally, it means that *their hearts went out* or *their hearts went forth*. It is a figure of speech similar to our figurative use of the phrase *I almost had a heart attack*. It threw their thinking and emotions into a turmoil. Bullinger calls this an hyperbole and says that it is beautifully rendered by *their hearts failed them*. They were already remembering the guilt from what they had done to Joseph and they had been waiting for the other shoe to drop, so to speak—and it just did.

Since they do not know who Joseph is, other than a high ranking official who is about to kill their brother and believes that they are spies, they are totally confused when they find that their money is in their sacks. It never occurs to them that it was returned to them out of kindness. This sends them into a panic. It is bad enough that Joseph thinks that they are spies; it is even worse that it now looks as though they have stolen back their money (that is, they are concerned that is how it will appear to Joseph).

**When they came to Jacob their fathers in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had occurred to them, saying, "The man—the lord of the land—spoke roughly to us and he took us for spies in the land."** [Gen. 42:29–30]

We have an interesting and widely used Hebrew word here: the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAN*] is used. It means generally *to give, to put, to set, to make*. It has a wide variety of applications, being translated in almost as many ways as it is found in the Old Testament. It has been translated *apply, appoint, ascribe, charge, commit, direct, deliver up, distribute, grant, perform, ordain, offer, render, recompense, requite*, etc. Here it would be permissible to translate this *he made us out to be spies, he charged us with being spies, he ascribed us as spies*.

**"But we said to him, 'We are honest men—we are not spies. We twelve are brothers, sons of our father; one is no more and the youngest this day [is] with our father in the land of Canaan.'" [Gen. 42:31–32]**

As before, they are all speaking almost all at once in their emotional upheaval. This is naturally a repeat of what we have heard before. When they proclaimed *we are not spies*, we have the negative and the Qal perfect, meaning we are not now and have never been spies. It is a flat out denial.

**"Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, 'By this I shall know that you are honest men: One of your brothers leave with me. Take the grain [or, corn<sup>135</sup>] for the famine of your households and go.'" [Gen. 42:33]**

Jacob has already noticed the absence of Simeon; about which he was not too concerned. However, he has a new favorite son: Benjamin, the youngest, the son of his right woman Rachel who has died. Jacob is abnormally devoted to Benjamin. Furthermore, although the loss of his son Joseph could have been a cause for Jacob to grow, by his own free will, into an embittered, self-centered and selfish old man. Some people who are in authority must have their way because that is their place in life and they have taken responsibility for this position. Others in authority have assumed no responsibility; only authority, which is asserted for their own needs and desires.

**"[Furthermore, he said] 'Bring your youngest brother to me; then I will know that you are not spies but you are [indeed] honest men. Your brother [Simeon] I will deliver to you and you will trade [freely] in the land.'" [Gen. 42:34]**

The word for *deliver* is our friend *nâthan*. See how much differently the word can be taken by a different context?

**And it was as they emptied their sacks and every man saw that the bundle of his money was in his sack. When they saw the bundles of their money, they and their father were indeed dismayed [lit., they and their father—they were dismayed]. [Gen. 42:35]**

When the fodder was taken out for the donkeys, only one discovered money in his sack. Apparently the more substandard grain or a different type of grain was kept in his sack specifically for their donkeys (like I know anything about donkeys). It is at this time when they all discovered that they have money in their sacks and they become particularly worried. They do not know what it was there and they do not know what the mean official in Egypt will think if he discovers that they have not paid for this grain.

### **Jacob Refuses to Let Benjamin Go**

**Then Jacob said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children—Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more; and now Benjamin you would take? All this has come upon me" [Gen. 42:36]**

It is a sad thing. Jacob, before his temporary loss of Joseph, was finally showing some signs of spiritual growth (apart from his favoritism) and the loss of his favorite son could have catapulted him into spiritual maturity. However, he allowed it to turn him into the bitter selfish old man that he was. Simeon is not dead; he is being held hostage. Benjamin was to be taken as proof of their heritage. God has clearly promised to Jacob that He would prosper his line and that his seed would be as the sand of the sea. So what is Jacob's problem? He is self-pitying, self-absorbed and bitter. His soul is filled with mental attitude sins. He certainly should have grieved for the loss of his son Joseph; but that occurred two decades previous. No matter how much you love someone, people all die and we will all spend time without the people that we love. It is a fact of life. Grief is normal and we should grieve; however, given a reasonable period of time, we, as the living, must continue living. We have to let go. Even had Joseph died, Jacob would see him again in heaven. Jacob can think about no one but himself and he

---

<sup>135</sup> Grain, or corn, is found in the western Aramæan and the Septuagint

acts as though his brothers have killed off three of his sons (one of whom, Simeon, he doesn't even care that much for; he just threw in his name for emphasis).

**Then Reuben said to his father, saying, "My two sons slay if I do not bring him back to you. Place him in my care [lit., put him in my hand] and I will bring him back to you." [Gen. 42:37]**

Reuben finally shows the kind of responsibility and forthrightness that he should have shown twenty years previous. He does not say *we*; he does not share this responsibility; and the consequences will cause him and not his other brothers to suffer. This is one of the few times that we see Reuben, as the oldest brother, behaving as the oldest brother should behave. He is direct and he assumes responsibility. He must square off against his self-centered father.

**"My son will not go down with you for his brother is dead and he only is left. If harm should befall him on the journey that you take [lit., that you go in it] [then] you would bring down my gray hairs to Sheol." [Gen. 42:38]**

Jacob is responsible for seventy starving people in the midst of a famine. He will need to establish regular trade with Egypt in order to save all of his family. He has become a stupid, short-sighted, selfish old man who thinks of no one but himself. He had all the potential for spiritual greatness when he began his old age but he lost that potential. The mental attitude sin of self-pity has ruined his spiritual life and his testimony. This oldest book—the Bible—applies to us today. We can all take a lesson from Jacob's self-pitying bitterness; we need to confess these sins to God—continuously if need be—and take in His Word and trust Him. There will always be things which occur in our lives which would cause us to be upset and bitter. The adversity that we face in life should not be internalized. We have the option of standing up to adversity and the mental attitude sins that we might subject ourselves to. This Jacob, unfortunately, chose not to do.

*You would bring my gray hairs to Sheol* contains a couple metonymies; his sons would not physically carry his gray hairs to the grave, but he means that by their actions and intentions, they would cause his death. Jacob is not speaking literally of his gray hairs, but they figuratively stand for him in his old age. Sheol stands for his death. This phrase is a colorful, expressive euphemism for causing his death.

---



---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---



---

**Genesis 43** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 43

### Genesis 43:1–34

**Introduction:** In Gen. 42, Joseph's ten brothers returned to their father and related what Joseph had said to them. They desired to return with Benjamin so that Joseph would free Simeon, who was held hostage in the Egyptian prison. Jacob, because he loved Benjamin more than he loved Simeon, would not allow this. He had become a cold, selfish, hard-hearted old man and he will not bend on this. He had his grain, he had his favorite son, and Jacob was not going to let any of his sons go back to Egypt with Benjamin.

In chapter 43, we pick up the narrative six months to a year later. Their food will only last for so long. They had no way of knowing how long the famine would last so they brought provisions for probably a year, expecting that the next year would have a normal rainfall. They assumed that it would get them through a bad season and that they would prosper again. They had wealth, but they did not have food (specifically grain). They needed grain to make bread and they needed grain for their animals. In this chapter, they will have to return to Joseph once again. This period of time intervening allows Joseph to think through this situation so that he does not make a hasty decision.

The outline:

- Vv. 1–10 **Judah convinces his father to allow them to return to Egypt**
- Vv. 11–14 **Jacob's advice for their trip**
- Vv. 15–23 **The brothers in Egypt are taken to Joseph's house**
- Vv. 24–34 **The brothers have a royal meal with Joseph**

#### Judah Convinces His Father to Allow Them to Return to Egypt

**Now the famine was severe in the land. When they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again—buy us a little food." [Gen. 43:1–2]**

Jacob has a great deal of nerve. Even though time has passed, what has occurred has not. Simeon is still incarcerated in Egypt. Simeon has a wife and children, but no one is going to act because Jacob would not allow Benjamin to leave under any circumstances. So every day, they all sit down at a meal with Simeon's wife and children and every day they are reminded where he is. Jacob finds that his family (especially himself and Benjamin) are about to go hungry so he proposes to send his sons back for more grain, as if nothing had happened.

**But Judah said to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.' If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food for you." [Gen. 43:3–4]**

Note that some slang goes back quite a ways; here Joseph is called *the man*, terminology used today of one in authority (although it is used in derision today). Since they do not know who Joseph is and they do not know what his specific rank is, they refer to him as *the man*, a term here of fear and respect.

This is one of the few times that we will see the brothers distinguished. Reuben and Judah have stood out in this ordeal, both of them revealing some maturity and nobility. They had been biding their time; they desired to retrieve Simeon, but could not unless Benjamin went with them.

**"However, if you will not send him then we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother [is] with you.'" [Gen. 43:5]**

Jacob is rather hard-headed and this will have to be said to him several times before he realizes that he has not alternative but for the family to starve or for him to send Benjamin down to Egypt with his brothers.

**Israel said, "Why did you treat me so ill to tell the man that you had another brother?" [Gen. 43:6]**

Here I am surprised at the use of the name *Israel* instead of *Jacob*. Since that is his God-given name, one would expect it to be used when he is doing or saying something of spiritual significance. However, here, Jacob is whining. It is clear what the alternatives are and no matter what is discussed, the alternatives will remain the same. Even if his sons were wrong, which they weren't, the past cannot be changed. What he will say to them will not be by way of a valuable lesson in their lives; a reiteration of what they should have learned from what they had done—it will just be Jacob trying to place blame. There is no one more egotistical than someone who thinks that everything that others do concerns them, and that they are the victim of everyone else's actions.

When the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery, it did not full enter into their consciousness just how much this would impact their father Jacob. They simply did not think things through.

So there is no misunderstanding, Jacob is wrong in two areas: (1) he is trying to place blame where there is none (what comes to mind is frivolous lawsuits); and, (2) he turns things around so that he sees what was done was an intentional slight against him. This is short-sighted and egotistical.

**They replied, "The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' What we told him upon the mouth of these words [or, told him according to these words]—how could we in any way know that he would say, 'Bring down your brother?'" [Gen. 43:7]**

Although in chapter 42 we do not have the specific question, *is your father still alive*, this would have been a question that Joseph would have asked. Apparently in Gen. 42:12, Joseph inquired about the family, having been told that they were the sons of one man. The reason we know this is not this passage (because here Judah could be lying) but in Gen. 44:19, Judah reminds Joseph that he, Joseph, inquired about the family. Judah will know enough at that point not to try to snow Joseph. So they volunteer information about their father and about Benjamin. They weren't wrong in doing so; there is no real blame to lay on anyone here. And they were absolutely right when they said, *how could we have known that he would say, 'Bring down your brother?'"* They did not know who Joseph was, they had assumed that their explanation as to the number would be reasonably explained by the fact that they are all brothers, sons of the same man. As brothers, they undertook certain responsibilities together.

We must also bear in mind that Joseph appeared to have interviewed several brothers independently, as a prime minister would do of people he suspects of being spies.

When it says *we told him upon the mouth of these words*, it is idiomatic for *this is what in essence we told him. or these are the words with which we spoke to him.*

**Then Judah said to Israel, his father, "Send the lad with me and we will arise and go that we may live and not die; both we and you and also our little ones." [Gen. 43:8]**

You may be wondering why Reuben is not speaking up at this point. This is almost exactly what Reuben said a few months earlier. Reuben is pissed off at his father and possibly has not spoken to him for the past several

months. He understood the situation—he was there, he and his brothers did nothing wrong—and he was highly frustrated with his father. This is normal when you have a viewpoint which is absolutely right and you know that it is right and still the person who needs to know it flatly denies reality. Reuben had laid it on the line, his father was a hard-headed jerk, so it is possible that Reuben ceased to communicate with him.

We do not know if this is the case, but Judah appears to take his place in a leadership position.

Although it cannot be seen in my translation or in almost any other translation, this verse has seven or eight *ands* in it. When there are no *ands*, one is moved immediately past all the inconsequential to the important climax. However, here, each phrase is important, said slowly, so that Jacob gets the full impact of the argument. This verse should read, *and Judah said to Israel, his father, send the lad with me and we will get up and we will go and we will live and so we will not die; also we and you and our households*. Each phrase and each action is important in order to make the points to Jacob.

**"I myself will make a pledge for him; you may hold me responsible for him [lit., from my hand, you shall require him]. If I do not bring him to you and sit him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever." [Gen. 43:9]**

Judah's first words were the personal pronoun in the singular: *ʾânôkîy* (אֲנִי) [pronounced *awn-oh-KEE*]; occasionally, the accent is on the second syllable] and the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffix, Qal imperfect of *ʿārab* (בָּרַע) [pronounced *gaw-RAH<sup>BV</sup>*] and it means *to make a pledge, to give a pledge, to give something as security*. Judah, seeing that his father is listening to reason now, continues to speak. Judah understands his father's reticence and is saying whatever he possibly can to persuade his father. He knows that it is working because Jacob has finally stopped talking and is listening.

**"For if we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice." [Gen. 43:10]**

This statement gives us a better understanding of the time frame involved here. This indicates that easily, a full year has passed. Just enough food was purchased to get them through a growing season.

### Jacob's Advice for Their Trip

**Then Israel, their father, said to them, "If it must be so then do this: take some of the choice fruits [or, products]<sup>136</sup> of the land in our bags [lit., containers or vessels] and carry a present down—a little balm, and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds." [Gen. 43:11]**

Jacob now reveals that he has a bit of sense—he intends to show his respect by bringing Joseph things which they likely do not have much of in Egypt. It does not sound like a lot to us, but their diet was very limited to the area around them and what could be grown. They did not have the incredible system of canning and preserving foods or the marvelous industry of trucking that we do. The occasional caravan of Ishmaelites was their trucking industry for all intents and purposes. So they had very little variety compared to what we have today. Jacob is revealing some thoughtfulness and some foresight, two characteristics which we might be surprised that he had.

In case you have always wondered, myrrh is an aromatic gum, apparently used as a perfume (as in Psalm 45:8) and as an anointing oil (Ex. 30:23–25). Most agree that it comes from a small tree known as *Commiphora myrrha*, a tree whose branches and trunk exude a gum with a wonderful fragrance. It is claimed that by this time myrrh had not yet been introduced from Africa yet. A quick examination of the Hebrew reveals that this is not the usual word for myrrh (this particular word is found only here and in Gen. 37:25). This is likely lodanum. For those who are concerned at this point, the two Genesis references are the word *lôṭ* (לוֹט) [pronounced *lote*] and the other Old Testament references are the word *môr* or *môwr* (מֹר or מֹוּר) [pronounced *more*].

<sup>136</sup> This Hebrew word is found only here and this is the best guess as to its meaning

Trade between various countries for these luxury items had been going on for some time. We have found Egyptian glass beads and African ivory carvings from circa this time period as far east as the Austrian Alps. Egypt even imported silk from all the way from China (historians guess that this came overland by way of India). Egypt desired a number of things that it would not cultivate for another thousand years, such as nuts, tomatoes, oranges and lemons. The Egyptians did already have bees and beekeepers and honey was a staple of their diet. However, what Jacob offered was a wild honey from the land of Canaan, which would be a delicacy for the Egyptians. Such a honey has a sharp smoky taste (as I have read<sup>137</sup> in Barthel's *What the Bible Really Says*) and it was imported to Egypt from as far away as Syria (and, later, Greece).

**"Furthermore, take with you [lit., in your hand] double the silver and carry back with you the silver that was returned to you in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight."**

[Gen. 43:12]

They still have no idea why the money was in their sacks; that has been a matter of concern to them. They don't know if Joseph will accuse them of stealing it when he finds that it is missing. Jacob has the take twice the money that it cost them the first time for grain and to also return the money which was put back in their sacks. He is doing and thinking of everything he possibly can to make this trip less stressful. Primarily, he does not want to lose Benjamin.

**"And take your brother and arise, go again to the man."** [Gen. 43:13]

They do not know what Joseph's title is; they do not know who he is, other than a high ranking official; so they continually refer to him as *the man*. Here, Jacob finally gives in to the inevitable. He will not see any of his sons again unless Benjamin goes with them.

**"Furthermore, God Almighty [El Shaddai] will grant you mercy before the man that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin; if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."**

[Gen. 43:14]

This is perhaps the most sensible that Jacob has been for a long time. He places his faith once again in God, trusting that God is in control and that if it is God's plan for him to lose his children, then so be it. Jacob has been put into a helpless situation and finally begins to think straight because of that. We have several ways that we may choose God's plan—we can learn from God's Word and the mistakes of others or we can be like Jacob, get pushed up against the wall and because there are no other human options, he has no choice but to trust in God. This is not the best that God has for us, but it is better than nothing. As Thieme put it, "As a last resort, maybe God will help."

### **The Brothers in Egypt Are Taken to Joseph's House**

**So the men took the present and they took double the money with them and Benjamin and they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.** [Gen. 43:15]

The repetition of *ands* here means that the sons of Jacob are quite apprehensive and worried and they take this process step by step, avoiding in their minds that they may all be imprisoned, enslaved or executed upon their return to Egypt.

**When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the one over his house, "Bring the men into the house and slaughter an animal and prepare it for supper [lit., make ready] for these men are to dine with me at noon."** [Gen. 43:16]

---

<sup>137</sup> He did not provide any samples

Joseph began his stay in Egypt as being the one over the household of Potiphar and now he has a servant over his house. This servant would oversee the details and might be minimally involved. Joseph has not yet spoken directly to his brothers and they have only heard him bark out a few orders in Egyptian. They are probably standing in his office (or palace; his place of business) with Joseph in front of them speaking in Egyptian to his head servant. Or, he may have a separate house, and this would therefore be at his personal home.

Whereas we have evidence that there were poulterer's shops in Egypt, there were no butcher shops as far as can be found in ancient Egyptian history. When a large beast was to be slaughtered, this was done in the courtyard of the home. Their diet staples would have included poultry (not chicken), fish and vegetables, and we have market places for all these, but we have no market places for the meat of quadrupeds. Either there was not a demand or the meat was so expensive that people only slaughtered their own and only for times of great feasts. We find the slaughter of animals for food on a great many monuments, indicating that this was a particularly special occasion when cattle was served.

**The man did as Joseph ordered him and the man brought the men to Joseph's house.**  
[Gen. 43:17]

The man sees to several tasks and one of them was to bring Joseph's brothers to his personal house. This had them worried because they were aware that some houses of high ranking officials also had adjunct prisons (as the one Joseph was incarcerated in).

**And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house and they said, "It is because of the silver which was replaced in our sacks the first time that we are brought in so that he may seek occasion against us [lit., roll himself upon us] and to fall upon us and to take us for slaves with our donkeys."** [Gen. 43:18]

They are all apprehensive about what has occurred. Joseph has not said anything directly to them, even through the interpreter. He has not bothered to listen to their explanation or to what they have brought for him. They showed up, Joseph has given several commands to those under him, and now they find themselves being led to his house. They are discussing these things among themselves. One thinks that they will be taken as slaves; another says this is because of the money; another says that at Joseph's home, he has a royal guard capable of overpowering them.

**So they went up to the steward of Joseph's house and spoke with him at the door of the house: "Oh my lord, we came down the first time to buy food and it came to pass when we arrive at the lodging place, we opened our sacks and there was every man's money in the mouth of this sack; our silver in full weight. Therefore, we have brought it again with us."** [Gen. 43:19–21]

They have wanted to speak to the interpreter to speak to Joseph, but they only saw Joseph momentarily and he gave them no occasion to speak. He already knew what he had planned—he had been planning this for months now and was happy to see them. Although the brothers wanted to speak directly to Joseph (through his interpreter) they decided that they had better speak quickly to someone. So they begin speaking very quickly to the man who is in charge of Joseph's house, Joseph's personal assistant, if you will; the one escorting them to his house.

**"And we have brought down with us [lit., in our hand] more silver to buy food. We do not know who put our silver in our sacks."** [Gen. 43:22]

The obviously had better get all of this taken care of before it gets to be too late. They do not want to be placed in jail or enslaved and then suddenly tell anyone who would listen what was on their minds.

**He replied, "Peace to you; do not be afraid; your God and the God of your father must have put for you secret treasure in you sacks; as for your silver, it has come in to me." Then he brought out Simeon to them.** [Gen. 43:23]



It is rather humorous—this servant speaks to them in perfect Hebrew and uses some specifically Hebrew phrases to them. They do not realize that Joseph has taught these phrases to his servants. Because of Joseph, his servants have become bilingual (Joseph also learned the Egyptian language, obviously, out of respect for the country that he found himself in).

This servant was also instructed to tell them if they had asked about the silver in their sacks, that it came from God their father and that he received the silver from them fine. He was in charge of Joseph's household, which included the accounting chores. It was Joseph's discretion to return the money to his brothers and he instructed his servant to act as though they received and deposited the money from his brothers.

### **The Brothers Have a Royal Meal with Joseph**

**And when the man brought the men into Joseph's house and had given them water and they washed their feet and when they had given food to their donkeys, they made ready the present for Joseph's coming at noon; for they heard that they should have supper there [lit., eat bread there].** [Gen. 43:24–25]

I don't know exactly what they did to the present, but it was the ancient equivalent of us wrapping a present today. They were treated quite well, and this surprised them. They kept waiting for the ax to fall, but instead they are given water to wash with (a fairly rare commodity) and their animals were taken care of (notice that they are taken care of before they eat, an excellent custom which has come down to us today).

**When Joseph came home, they brought to him the present which they had with them into the house and bowed down to him to the ground.** [Gen. 43:26]

The brothers did have some rough spots and they made some serious mistakes in their time, but they did understand respect and protocol. They present themselves as servants to Joseph and give him this gift as a gesture before they start talking about the money in their sacks.

**Then he asked of them, about their welfare and said, "Is your father well—the old man of whom you spoke—is he still alive?"** [Gen. 43:27]

Joseph can see that they are all fine and that Benjamin is fine; he is concerned about his father, whom he realizes is fairly old. It sounds to them as though he is making polite conversation and personal inquiries.

**"Your servant, our father, is well; he is still alive." and they bowed their heads and made obeisance [or, prostrated themselves].** [Gen. 43:28]

Note how this is just like the dreams which Joseph had; they had come and all bowed before him in obeisance to him.

**And he looked [lit., lifted up his eyes] and saw Benjamin, his brother, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son."** [Gen. 43:29]

Joseph was no doubt filled with emotion when he said this, not having seen his younger brother for twenty years.

**Because he became overcome with emotion [lit., his compassions were warmed] for his brother and he sought to weep, Joseph quickly [lit., made haste and he] entered into a private room [or, the inner chamber] and wept there.** [Gen. 43:30]

The noun is not the word we find for the heart but it is masculine plural (with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix) of the word *rachămîym* (רַחֲמִים) [pronounced *rah-khuh-MEEM*] in the singular can mean *womb* and, by extension,

*maiden*. However, in the plural it literally means *bowels, inner portions of man*; however, it is never really used literally in the Bible like that. Its figurative meaning is *compassions, emotions, brotherly feelings, motherly feelings*. The Bible often used words which described inner organs which could not be seen for emotions, thoughts and feelings, which could not be seen. The verb for this noun is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, Niphal perfect of *kâmar* (כָּמַר) [pronounced *kaw-MAHR*] which means *to become warm, to grow hot*; figuratively, it means *to become emotional, to become warm, to be deeply affect by emotion; to be overcome with emotion; to become tender*. It is only found used in this way in our passage, 1Kings 3:26 and Hos. 11:8.

The first verb I translated as an adverb for better English sense, but it is the Piel imperfect of *mâhar* (מָהַר) [pronounced *maw-HAHR*] and it means *to hurry, to hasten, to make haste*. The Piel is the intensive stem, meaning he had to quickly get out of there before he began crying in front of them. This is a verb and used in the beginning of the sentence (not in the middle where I put it) meaning that the first thought that went through Joseph's head upon seeing his brother was he had to quickly get out of there, because he felt so emotional. He quickly moved into a private room where he could not be heard and he cried there.

**He then washed his face and came out and controlling himself, he said, "Let the food be served [lit., set on bread]." [Gen. 43:31]**

In case you have wondered why we often find the word *bread* used where we would use the word *food*. In the ancient world, it is estimated that three out of four people subsisted almost entirely upon bread made of barley or of wheat. So for those in the ancient world, the word *bread* was essentially synonymous with the concept of food.

Joseph was not yet ready to reveal to his brothers who he was; plus he had a wonderfully humorous thing which he had been planning to do, which would not work if they knew who he was.

**They served him by himself and they by themselves and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians ere not to eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to Egyptians. [Gen. 43:32]**

When an animal was slaughtered, Joseph held a meal for everyone under his roof, but, because he was Jewish, the Hebrews could not eat at the same table with him because they viewed the Hebrews as dirty shepherds (see Gen. 46:34). This custom of the Egyptians was probably applied to all foreigners (whom they called *Hebrews*), as a matter of prejudice (and they likely quoted cleanliness as a reason—which likely was true). In general, the Egyptians would not use the knives of a foreigner when it came to eating or cutting up an animal, as they viewed foreigners as essentially dirty. Part of this was because those outside Egypt slaughtered animals that they considered to be unclean, therefore they had used their knives on unclean beasts.

When it comes to separation, we had similar customs in the United States in the 1950's and before—in some areas, blacks and whites did not eat together at the same table. Joseph's brothers did not fully understand Joseph dining separately from the others, as they understood Joseph to be an Egyptian. They must have thought that he preferred to dine separately or did not dine with the hired help or lower officials. Very likely, Joseph's servants did not eat when Joseph was eating, but were concerned with serving him and his family.

It is unclear whether the Egyptians ate with Joseph or not; and, if not, it could be due to his high rank. I think that by this time, Joseph had been fully accepted as an Egyptian, since he knew their language, their customs and observed their same rules of cleanliness.

An area that we will have trouble with is whereas the Bible does forbid prejudice (Gal. 3:28), it does not forbid segregation (or, for that matter, slavery<sup>138</sup>). It is contemporary viewpoint that the old *separate but equal* laws are archaic and backwards, whereas it is common today for a business executive or a white collar worker to look down upon a janitor or a receptionist (who would look down upon the janitor). We have in our minds various slots that

---

<sup>138</sup> Although the Old Testament forbids certain types of slavery and the New Testament recommends that believers who own slaves free those slaves who are fellow believers.

people fit into when it comes to social status (often based more upon perceived salary than upon ability) and we gravitate or avoid people because of our perception of their social status. This is prejudicial behavior and prohibited by the Bible. Note that this all begins as a mental attitude of supposed superiority—thinking of ourselves more than we ought to think. It may or may not result in an overt sin.

We have this in politics, where Democrats often believe that conservatives or Republicans are racist (or, significantly racist). If you are a Democrat who believes in Jesus Christ, this is a prejudice that you need to toss out.

We are allowed, on the other hand to associate (or to refrain from associating) from whomever we chose. So it is fine for a business executive to chose to associate with other business executives and to socialize with same; as long as he does not look down upon the janitor who empties his trash, or the waitress who serves him his lunch, or a receptionist who brings him coffee. Our social standings that we had on earth will be far different from those which we will have in heaven (we will have social standings in heaven). It is not uncommon for a janitor to have a spiritual life far above those under whom he works and the divine good which he performs lasts for eternity, whereas the human good performed by the executive last for a few years.

**And they [Joseph's servants] seated [lit. they sat] before him the first-born according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in amazement each to his companion. [Gen. 43:33]**

Joseph had set up the seating arrangements beforehand. The Egyptians did not have rectangular tables, insofar as we know, but round tables, and usually small tables which seated just a few people. There were still positions of these tables which implied rank. He placed the brothers in order from oldest to the youngest; I cannot tell if this was done by mothers and whether each group was seated at a particular table according to who his mother was. My guess is, the brothers were simply organized by birth date, without regard for their mothers. In any case, this was an arrangement which the brothers all understood and the *coincidence* that it occurred amazed them.

Not being mathematicians, they did not realize that this could not just accidentally occur. The chances of this happening are about one out of 3,628,794.<sup>139</sup> They were quite amazed by how they were seated, but they did not know that this was outside the realm of possibility. This is not unlike the present day evolutionist who does realize that it is unlikely that eventually non living material combined in such a way to become living material and that mutated ad infinitum into plant life, animals and humans—he realizes that this is quite a coincidence and cannot be duplicated in the lab, but he does not know just how far the odds are stacked up against evolution.

**And portions from before him were taken to them and Benjamin's portion was five times greater than the portion of all of them. So they drank and were merry with him. [Gen. 43:34]**

At first they were quite apprehensive, but after being allowed to clean up and then to sit together in a marvelous palatial home eating the best food that they had tasted in several years, they soon eased up.

According to Freeman, the food sat in very large dishes from which was taken smaller portions in smaller dishes to the individual guests by servants.

According to Barthel, Egyptians ate crouched around small, short-legged tables sans utensils, but with individual finger bowls. Roast goose was a favored dish, as was batter cooked ox, along with mutton and goat. They did not eat pork. Quail and pigeon were easily obtained and considered to be poor man's food. Egypt had a very hot climate and meat spoiled quickly so animals were slaughtered immediately before the meal and, apparently,

---

<sup>139</sup> For the mathematicians out there, I took  $10! - 6$ ; that is there are  $11!$  ways of seating the brothers; however, Joseph already was told that Benjamin was the youngest, so once the other ten have been placed, then Joseph would know where he would belong; I subtracted 6 as an arbitrary number of various placements which would have caused the brothers to be amazed (there would have been several dozen more schemes that would have been amusing but not amazing). If they all sat at different tables, then this would have decreased the probability considerably, but it would have still been far outside the realm of chance.

everyone ate. Since it is possible that this was under the Hyksos Dynasty, then the meal customs would have been somewhat different.

Usually a king was honored with a double portion. Here, Joseph honored Benjamin as though he were greater than two kings. His brothers did not understand it, but Joseph made them feel at ease enough to enjoy themselves tremendously. Joseph was one of those people who had few mental attitude sins and was able to make those around him feel at ease because he was not filled with mental attitude sins. He was not bitter; he did not hate any of those around him; he was not involved in some inordinate competition. He was at peace with God and was able to convey that to those around him. However—and this is something that most commentaries miss—Joseph has a very specific plan, and that will take place in the next chapter. If you understand Joseph's plan, then everything in the upcoming chapter makes sense. If you do not, then what Joseph does is going to seem as if he is trying to randomly mess with his brothers.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 44** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 44

### Genesis 44:1–34

**Introduction:** In Gen. 44, Joseph tests his brothers. He knows what his father is like with his favoritism and he knew that Benjamin did not come down originally because his father could not bear to part with him; therefore he gave him preferential treatment, the same treatment that he gave Joseph. This is the same treatment which Joseph received which caused him to be estranged from his brothers and caused his brothers to turn away from him. However, now he would find out if his brothers had grown beyond this petty rivalry. It was not Joseph's fault that his father favored him and it is not Benjamin's fault that Jacob favors him. Joseph will find out in this chapter whether his brothers will stand by Benjamin or whether they will forsake him.

The outline:

- Vv. 1–3 Joseph's brothers depart from him
- Vv. 4–13 Joseph's household steward brings them back because of theft
- Vv. 14–34 Judah makes an appeal to Joseph

#### Joseph's Brothers Depart from Him

**Then he commanded the steward of his house, saying "Fill the sacks of the men with food—as much as they can carry and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack and my cup—my silver cup—you will place in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, along with his money for the grain. So he did as Joseph said [lit., according to the word of Joseph which he spoke].**  
[Gen. 44:1–2]

What Joseph is doing will seem somewhat odd for awhile. You will wonder just what is his purpose. Is he simply playing mind games with his brothers? Under the circumstances, such behavior would not be unusual; however, Joseph actually has a purpose for doing what he does.

This cup is larger than the average cup; it is almost a bowl, although it is used for drinking (v. 5). Such a distinction is made in Jer. 35:5 between this sized cup and the more normal sized cups.

**At dawn [lit., The morning light], the men were sent away; they and their donkeys.** [Gen. 44:3]

Joseph put his steward in charge of getting the donkeys ready. He took care of the feeding and the watering and getting them ready for the ride out the next day. He also loaded up the donkeys with the grain.

#### Joseph's Household Steward Brings Them Back Because of Theft

**When they had gone from the city, but they had not gone far, Joseph said, to his steward, "Up, follow after the men and when you overtake them, say to them 'Why have you returned evil for**

**good<sup>140</sup>? Is this not which my lord drinks from and that he divines by? You have done wrong in so doing."** [Gen. 44:4–5]

This silver cup is a prized possession of Joseph's and he will accuse Benjamin of stealing it. When I first read through this, I thought to myself that Joseph is just playing some kind of mind games with his brothers. However, he actually has a purpose. He has not revealed himself to his brothers yet and he may not reveal himself depending upon the outcome of this plan.

As we will see, Joseph does not himself divine from this cup because he is not an heathen. However, archeological evidence attests that these cups were certainly used for that reason in ancient Egypt. Several opinions have been given as to the exact methodology that was used, including divinations by means of (1) examining the light reflected on the water; (2) examining melted wax dropped into the water; (3) observing the bubbles and their behavior once the cup was shaken; (4) chunking stuff into the water and then contact with the dead was achieved; and (5) concentrating upon a point in the bowl and falling into an hypnotic, trance-like state.

The question in v. 4 is not a question used to obtain information, but a rhetorical question, one usually asked in this kind of situation to show the other person to what depth they have sunk morally. Here, it is a part of the act of moral indignation.

**When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words; they said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing."** [Gen. 44:6–7]

Joseph's steward moves quickly on Joseph's command. He does not understand fully what is going on but he has the authority orientation to obey Joseph. Some people when under authority must know from their superiors why are they doing it this way and not that? This servant was properly oriented and he did as he was told. Joseph had a reason for what he did and it was not for the servant to know. This is why this man was head over Joseph's entire estate because when Joseph gave an order, he was able to obey it without question with complete deference to Joseph's demands.

The reason that Joseph had moved to such a high state in the human realm is because he was faithful in the little things, competent and oriented to authority. During this famine, he was realistic. Whereas Egypt set aside a great deal of grain, it had to last Egypt for seven years. Joseph did not try to cure world hunger; this was an impossibility. He did not send grain abroad to every country he could think of, praying that God would take up the slack during the last 4 or 5 years for Egypt. He did allow grain to be shipped out of his country, but both the Egyptians and the foreigners paid for it. This is very much in keeping with God's plan. There is nothing wrong with capitalism or with personal wealth.

On the divine side, Joseph arose to his rank because this was God's plan for his life. However, Joseph faced a great deal of testing beforehand. He faced his brothers' cruelty and injustice and is now been given the chance to react as he sees fit. He faced a crucial time in his life where he was to depend upon man or depend upon God and he made the wrong choice and was put on the shelf for two years. Joseph knew God's Word and was guided spiritually in his life. He was fully occupied with our Lord Jesus Christ and was the first person in the line of Abraham to show that he had reached spiritual maturity.

**"See, here is the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. We brought it back to you from the land of Canaan. How then should we steal from your lord's house silver or gold?"** [Gen. 44:8]

The brothers were honest men. They have grown up a great deal spiritually, although not a one can approach Joseph in the spiritual realm. It would never occur to them to take anything from Joseph and they knew that of

---

<sup>140</sup> The Septuagint and the Syriac add to this *why then have you stolen the silver cup?*

each other. This is a thing which brothers will know about one another at times; particularly these. They knew their weaknesses and stealing out of lust was not one of them.

**"With whomever it be found of your servants, let him die and we also will be our lord's slaves."**  
[Gen. 44:9]

We do not know who is speaking or if this is primarily Reuben and Judah talking. Judah has become the spokesman on several occasions, as we have seen. No one in particular is credited with saying these things. There are two possible reasons for this. Joseph recorded these incidents and he was not here. He received some information about what he recorded from his brothers at a later date and he received information as to what transpired here from his steward. One would think that his steward does not know all of the brothers by name, except for Simeon and Benjamin; so he recalls what is said, just not who said it. However, this is a very bright servant and he knows who is who in Joseph's family (although he may not know that it is Joseph's family). We will see that in v. 12. Therefore, it is likely that (1) he did not take note as to who was speaking or (2) one or two brothers are speaking; one adding to what another has said.

Notice that he (or they) are very confident that no one stole anything belonging to Joseph. He has made a blanket statement to let that person be executed and to enslave all of the brothers if it turns out to be true that one of them stole from Joseph. They cannot believe that anyone in their family would do such a thing.

**So he said, "As you say. Thus it shall be: he with whom it is found shall be my slave and the rest shall be blameless."** [Gen. 44:10]

The steward is not saying that he will go along with their offer of servitude for all and death to the culprit. They have sworn to him that they are innocent to a man (v. 7–8) and he makes a noncommittal *so you say*. It is likely an idiom expressing that he has heard their side of the story, that they adamantly deny that anyone in their family would be capable of doing such a thing; and now here is how this matter will be handled. He has listened to them, but he has orders and he relates these orders, a mandate from Joseph, to them.

So that you will begin to get an idea as to why Joseph has done what he has done; the cup was specifically placed in Benjamin's sack. When Benjamin is found to have the cup, Joseph only wants Benjamin back. He will allow his other brothers to leave, scot free, without penalty. If the brothers agree to this, then he does not want them to return to the palace.

**Then every man quickly lowered his sack to the ground and every man opened his sack.**  
[Gen. 44:11]

All the brothers know that they are not guilty and it is almost a race as to who can show that they are honest men. Note their authority orientation also. We do not know how many people went with Joseph's servant—probably no one else or, at most, one or two others. The brothers could have over powered this servant, if they so chose. It would have been a risk, but they could have likely gotten away with it. However, they were in Egypt, under Joseph's rule, and they respected that.

**And he searched; with the eldest he began and ended with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.** [Gen. 44:12]

This tells us that he knew the brothers apart. If he knew the eldest and searched by age (something which he needed to know in order to seat the brothers when they ate with Joseph), then he could tell the brothers apart. He would have naturally known Simeon by name, as he was in jail for several months in Egypt. The older brothers, Reuben and Judah he would have gotten to know them, as they would have been the spokesmen for the brothers. Benjamin is the youngest, as Joseph's full brother, the one about whom Joseph would speak primarily. So he knew all of them by age and at least four by name (and, judging from the quality of his service to Joseph, he probably knew them all by name).

### Judah Makes an Appeal to Joseph

**Then they tore their clothes and every man loaded his donkey and they returned to the city.**  
[Gen. 44:13]

Now this is a major change in the brother's behavior. Joseph was the favorite of Jacob and this caused them great distress to the point that they would sell him into slavery and even debate murdering him out of jealousy. They have been told that all the brothers can go free other than the culprit. However, they all accompany Benjamin back to Egypt. This they do not have to do.

**When Judah came, and his brothers, to Joseph's house, he was still there and they fell before him to the ground.** [Gen. 44:14]

From what has been said and this verse, it appears as though Judah has taken over the leadership position in this family. He is the one who generally speaks on behalf of the brothers and he makes several unilateral decisions and he willingly assumes responsibility for his decisions and for his brothers. This is not the Judah from Gen. 38; he has exhibited a great deal of maturity and growth. The brothers do not make a run for it; they do not overpower the servant; they return en masse to Joseph and bow before him, showing their deference to his authority.

**And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man such as I can indeed divine?"** [Gen. 44:15]

Joseph is speaking to all of the brothers, not just to Benjamin here, in this pair of rhetorical questions. We know this because *you* is in the masculine plural; the verb is also in the 2nd person, masculine plural.

Nâchash (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHASH*] means *to by secret powers be enabled to know certain things, to divine*. Joseph is telling them that he knew that they had stolen from him because he is able to know things which are kept secret from others; he was claiming special telepathic powers. He obviously knew because he had the cup placed in Benjamin's things. This word is found twice in this verse; first in the Piel infinitive absolute and then in the Piel imperfect (3rd masculine singular). The Piel is the intensive stem. An infinitive absolute is a verb used as a noun. We might translate this, *in divining, I divine*. When it is doubled like this and in the Piel stem, it is intensified and great emphasis is placed upon this word. Joseph is saying, *You thought you could get away with this? You don't realize that I have supernatural powers? Nothing is hidden from me!* This great emphasis is done simply with a verb being written twice. In looking up this word, it is interesting that this is the same word as *serpent* with the difference of a vowel point or two. So that there is no confusion, Joseph spoke to them as an Egyptian, who were known for their practices in the art of divination. Joseph himself was not a heathen and did not practice divination. However, he tells his brothers here that he does as a part of his plan. This explains to them how he knew that they had the cup.

**And Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Further, how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are slaves to my lord, both we and he also whose cup has been found in his possession [lit., hand]."** [Gen. 44:16]

Note this marvelous change in the brothers. Ten of them could walk away from this; yet, to a man, they accompany Benjamin back to Joseph's house and they offer servitude to Joseph. This is beyond what they have to do. This is a very clever and well-thought out plan on Joseph's part. He has determined that the brothers could have reacted in several ways and he will act accordingly.

Judah again is the spokesman for the group. He has no explanation nor does he make any excuses. He does not berate his youngest brother there and he reiterates his offer of slavery to Joseph.

**And he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so. The man in whose possession [lit., hand] the cup was found shall be a slave to me. But, as for you, go up in peace to your father."**  
[Gen. 44:17]



Joseph again offers them a way out; they can leave the guilty party with Joseph—he would become a slave—and they could return to their father in the land of Canaan. Joseph makes it sound very reasonable. Benjamin was guilty of stealing; Joseph has set forth a fair punishment and they are allowed to leave in peace.

**Then Judah went up to him and said, "O my lord, please allow your servant to speak a word in my lord's ears and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself." [Gen. 44:18]**

Some people want all the authority and none of the responsibility. Judah has assumed the authoritative position in his family and he has also taken upon himself the responsibility that comes with it. He asks for a private counsel with Joseph. This is not unlike out court system where the judge has made a ruling and an attorney has asked if he could approach the bench for a side bar. Judah expresses his great respect for Joseph and asks for just a moment of his indulgence. He does not want to make things worse than they already are.

**"My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?'" [Gen. 44:19]**

This indicates that Joseph had inquired about his family earlier back in Gen. 42:12; it just was not recorded in Scripture at that time. Judah would not be trying to pull the wool over Joseph's eyes here because he cannot afford for things to become worse than they already are.

**"And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age—young. And his brother is dead and he is left alone of his mother's children and his father loves him.'" [Gen. 44:20]**

The brothers, particularly Judah, have been able to accept Jacob's favoritism of Benjamin; it was a serious issue when they were younger men and now it is a simple reality, but a non-issue. They do not allow this to upset them anymore. They recognize their father's love and devotion to his youngest son; that this is not out of the ordinary to have particularly strong feelings toward one's youngest child; and they have come to respect this love without jealousy and animosity.

**"Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may set my eye upon him.' And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father for if he should leave his father, he would die.'" [Gen. 44:21–22]**

Judah is pretty much recounting their conversation as he mentally tries to put together the rationale which he will present to Joseph. He has to impress upon Joseph how much his father loves Benjamin and that he would die without Benjamin at his side.

**"Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will no longer [be allowed] to see my face.' And it came about when we returned to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord." [Gen. 44:23–24]**

Note that Judah continually refers to himself and his brothers as Joseph's servants and to their father as Joseph's servant. This is meant to convey the greatest respect for Joseph in his position. Judah is not before Joseph with his hand out for himself or even for his family in general; he is asking for something, but he is willing to bargain for it.

**"And when our father said, 'Go again—buy us a little food'; we said, 'We cannot go down if our youngest brother is not with us; [if he is with us] then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'" [Gen. 44:25–26]**

Note that this conversation details what had occurred in Canaan; it is not complete; but the other portions have been recorded in Gen. 42. Together, we have a unified whole of what was said in Canaan and what was said here in the presence of Joseph.

**"Then your servant, my father, said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons and one remains with me.' And I said, 'Certainly, he has been torn to pieces and I have not seen him since.'" [Gen. 44:27–28]**

Now here the boys have told their father so many times about Joseph being mauled by a wild animal that they practically believe it themselves. *You know* is in the 2nd person, masculine plural, telling us that this is Jacob speaking to his ten sons.

**"If you also take this one from me [lit., my face] and harm comes upon him, you will bring down my gray hairs in misery to Sheol." [Gen. 44:29]**

Now he is quoting his father almost word-for-word.

**"Now therefore, when I come to your servant, my father, and the lad is not with us, because his life [lit., soul] is bound up in his life [lit., soul], and it will come to pass when he sees that the lad is not with us<sup>141</sup>, he will die and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant, our rather, with sorrow to Sheol." [Gen. 44:30–31]**

Judah appeals to the human side of Joseph; he is not giving him a line but passing on the situation as he perceived it to be. His father had lost a lot of spiritual ground when his son, Joseph, disappeared and never quite gained it back, although he showed some flashes of spiritual intelligence for a few moments.

Vv. 29 and 30 both help us with the semi-elusive meaning of the word often translated *evil*. In Gen. 42:38 and 44:31, the word for sorrow is *yâgôwn* (יגון) [pronounced *yaw-GOHN*] and it means *sorrow, grief, distress*. This is the masculine form, the most used form in the Bible (14 times). However, the word in v. 29 is not *yagown* but *râ'âh* (רעה) [pronounced *raw-AW*], the feminine adjective used as a substantive from the word translated *evil* or *wickedness*. As I have mentioned earlier, the feminine version of *evil* is the softer version of this word; we are not dealing with the attack from hell *evil*. This refers more to *sorrow, distress or misery*. The use of it here reveals that to us. It is in almost hidden areas such as this, sometimes undetected because of the translations, that we can determine the meanings of some words. Here, because of the close proximity, we see that Judah considered these words to be synonymous and used them as such. When armed even with *Strong's Concordance*, one misses this because he did not distinguish between the nouns or the adjectives that are translated *evil*. On a preliminary level, it appears as though there is an adjective *evil* which can be in the masculine or the feminine gender depending upon what it modifies; however, this adjective can also be used as a substantive in the masculine or the feminine gender, the change in gender altering its meaning considerably. In fact, it is only recently (relatively speaking—within the past century) that such a distinction has been made. Our earlier translations quietly translate the two words *sorrow*, and let it go at that, whereas *Strong's* made no distinction between the different forms of *evil*.

**"For your servant became a guarantee for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I will have sinned in the sight of my father all my life.'" [Gen. 44:32]**

There are no lies or half-truths here; just Judah trying to communicate to Joseph the situation with which he is faced. He has guaranteed the safety of the boy with his own life. He loves his father and is asking this both for his brother and for his father; not for himself. Judah notices that Joseph is patiently listening but he is not necessarily being swayed.

**"Now therefore, let your servant remain, I respectfully petition you instead of the lad, as a slave to my lord and let the lad go back with his brothers." [Gen. 44:33]**

This is quite a change in the mental attitude of his brothers. Here is a brother who had considered murdering Joseph because of his father's favoritism and now he is willing to trade his life as a slave for that of his brothers.

---

<sup>141</sup> These last two words are found in the Samaritan text, the Septuagint and in the Syriac

He is not concerned whether or not Benjamin is guilty. He is willing to pay for Benjamin's sins, as Jesus Christ was willing to pay for ours. Because of Judah's willingness to sacrifice his own life for his brother's, the line of the humanity of Jesus Christ will go through him. Joseph, seeing the tremendous change in his brother, realizing that if it were him, Judah would be making the same offer today, is becoming very moved at the change which has transpired in the character of his brothers.

**"For how can I go back to my father if the lad is not with me. I fear to see the evil that would come upon my father."** [Gen. 44:34]

*Evil* here is in the masculine; this is the insipid, devastating evil. This is the evil which would eat away at Jacob and destroy his life. Such a thing would turn Jacob from being the respected patriarch to a devastated, dying old man.

As a young man, Judah was selfish and self-centered, jealous of his brother Joseph, and willing to kill him if necessary. He has grown up and changed a great deal, even revealing some spiritual maturity, causing me to believe that he very likely was an author of a small portion of Scripture.

Now it is time to deal with Joseph's planning and motivation. To the casual reader, it would seem as though Joseph is just playing mind games with his brothers, hiding the cup with Benjamin, not telling his brothers who he was, etc. Or, the casual reader might think that Joseph is just doing these things to buy time in order to decide what his is going to do. Joseph is brilliant; whereas he may not formulate a complex plan immediately, given a few months, which he had while his brothers were back in the land of Canaan, Joseph had the time to formulate some plans concerning the next visit from his brothers. This visit he knew was inevitable because he knew that the depression would last for seven years and that his brothers had only taken enough provisions to get them into the next growing season. Joseph is not a man to play games like this and if this is what you perceived this situation to be, then you have not grasped Joseph's intentions. Below, I have listed the various things that could have happened once the cup was discovered on Benjamin's person. It will become plain to see that Joseph had a contingency plan for each possible outcome. If his brothers had not changed, he had no interest in renewing their relationship; but, had they changed, he longed for his family and his brothers and longed to be with them once again.

**Options for Joseph's brothers:** The brothers could desert Benjamin when he comes up as the guilty party.

**Joseph's response:** Joseph, after taking Benjamin into custody, reveal himself to Benjamin and allow Benjamin to live in Egypt with him.

**Joseph's brothers:** The brothers could have killed Joseph's servant.

**Joseph's response:** Joseph would have to pursue, capture and kill his brothers.

**Joseph's brothers:** They could have overpowered the servant and escaped.

**Joseph's response:** Joseph would have had to pursue, capture and incarcerate his brothers.

**Joseph's brothers:** The brothers could have returned with Benjamin and offered to take upon themselves the punishment that Benjamin deserves<sup>142</sup>

**Joseph's response:** Joseph then could reveal himself to his brothers

**Jacob:** If Benjamin was kept in Egypt and Jacob's other sons returned to him, he could have wasted away, a bitter old man

**Joseph:** Joseph would never see his father again until eternity

**Jacob:** If Benjamin was kept in Egypt and the brothers returned to Canaan, Jacob could have gone to Egypt himself to petition on behalf of his son

---

<sup>142</sup> Note how this parallels Christ dying for our sins, the just for the unjust, taking upon Himself the guilt, burden and penalty for our wrongdoing

**Joseph:** Joseph would have been reunited with his father

So note that Joseph's plan was such that no matter what happened, Joseph had an appropriate response which be apropos to the spiritual growth of his brothers and father. There are some people that in growing in God's Word that we have to leave behind. This is not for the disagreeable person who needs an excuse never to talk to his family again. However, there are times when we must leave some Christians behind in our lives—we do not harbor any metnal attitude sins against them, we do not seek revenge, we do not bad mouth them. However, all Christians are given the opportunity to grow. I found out early in my Christian life that very few Christians have any real interest in God's Word (which means they have very little interest in God). Our separation is primarily from other Christians in this life and there are some other believers from whom we must separate ourselves.

---

---

**Internal Links**

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

---

**Genesis 45** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 45

### Genesis 45:1–28

**Introduction:** In Gen. 45, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. He did not know if he should up until the last few moments when he saw that Judah was willing to trade the rest of his life for the freedom of Benjamin, who would have appeared to everyone to be in the wrong. However, Judah would be willing to stand in for Benjamin because of his love for Benjamin and their father; and because he had given his word to his father to take full responsibility. This indicated to Joseph that at least one of his brothers had changed considerably since they had sold Joseph into slavery. Furthermore, all the brothers came back with Benjamin, revealing that they were all concerned for Benjamin's welfare and they were presenting a united front. Joseph did not require all of them to return; only Benjamin. The other ten returned out of loyalty to their father and youngest brother.

Judah's honorable gesture moved Joseph to tears and gave him the desire to know his brothers once again. In this chapter, we will sit in on the conversation between Joseph and his brothers (although we will hear primarily from Joseph).

The outline:

- Vv. 1–4 **Joseph reveals who he is to his brothers**
- Vv. 5–12 **Joseph explains divine viewpoint to his brothers**
- Vv. 13–24 **Joseph gives his brothers marching orders**
- Vv. 25–28 **Jacob's sons tell him that they have seen Joseph**

#### Joseph Reveals Who He Is to His Brothers

**And Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him so he ordered, "Make everyone go out from me." And no one remained with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers." [Gen. 45:1]**

We have two primary words used to indicate that someone is saying something. The common word translated *said* is 'amar (אמר) [pronounced *aw-MAHR*] is used with great latitude and translated *saying, said, declared, answered, command, appoint, report*. The word used here is qârâ' (קרא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] and it means *to call out, to proclaim, to read aloud, to appoint, to summon*. Here, Joseph is quickly ordering his staff and whatever family might be around to immediately leave him. He knew that he was becoming uncontrollably emotional and he did not want to behave in this way in front of anyone but his original family. There is no word for *make* here, per se—that is the Hiphil or causative stem of the words *go out*.

As we have seen, certain Hebrew words have a variety of meanings depending upon the context and stem. 'Âmad (עמד) [pronounced *ġaw-MAHD*] can mean *to take a stand, to stand, to present oneself, to stand still, to tarry, to delay, to remain standing, to continue, to abide* and here it simply means *to remain* (which is in the Qal perfect, meaning that they all left all at once).

**And he wept aloud so that the Egyptians and the household of Pharaoh heard. [Gen. 45:2]**

Joseph met with people at his palace (or, had he been an executive, we would have said in his office). When his brothers returned and he fed them at his home, they had to be taken from where they were to there. This means that Pharaoh had a palace of sorts set up in this area that Jacob, as second-in-command, worked from. It is unclear if Joseph lived in the palace where he worked or how that was set up. Obviously, today, executives do not live at the office, no matter how high up the ladder they are.

Pharaoh appears to work out of a different palace, as there was no need for two commanding figures to rule over the same area. There are suggestions within this text that they were near each other (and it is not a stretch to think that there may have been more than one palace for Pharaoh to work out of).

This palace was staffed by Pharaoh with men who were principally responsible to Pharaoh, but they were under Joseph and they lived at this palace—these are the ones called *the household of Pharaoh*. There were also those who worked in the palace as Joseph did, and went home later; these are *the Egyptians*. Joseph's crying was so great and his emotions were so expressive, that he could be heard throughout the entire palace. He had never before cried where anyone could hear him so this was a great shock to those under his command. His staff had no idea who these people were exactly, although obviously realized that they were treated much differently than the rest of those who came to Egypt for help.

The Hebrew for *wept* is not what we would think. The verb is the Qal imperfect of *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*] and it means *to give, to put, to set, to place*. The direct object is *qôwl* (לִוְיָ) [pronounced *kohl*] and it means *voice, sounds* but not necessarily words. This is all followed by a preposition and the masculine singular of *bekîy* (בְּכִי) [pronounced *behk-EE*] and it means *weeping*. So the literal translation is **Joseph [kept] giving forth his voice in weeping.**

**Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him for they were dismayed at his presence.** [Gen. 45:3]

*Bâchal* (בָּחַל) [pronounced *baw-KHAHL*] is a marvelous Hebrew verb meaning *to tremble, to become alarmed, to become dismayed*. It is in the Niphal perfect and the Niphal is primarily a passive stem, but its meaning could also be conveyed by adding the word *become*. The perfect tense means that this occurred suddenly and completely. Their heads were flooded with a million thoughts that stopped the brothers in their tracks. This is a man they expected to never see again, someone who had been the focus of their shared guilt for nearly twenty years. Now here he was, the second in command in Egypt, with the wherewithal to have them executed by his word.

Asking about his father is not a rhetorical question. They have spoken about their father, but many years have passed and Joseph does not know whether they have been lying or telling the truth about their father's presence in the land of Canaan. Whereas Judah's offer to stand in for Benjamin sounds more than brotherly motivated, still Joseph is not thinking clearly. Prior to the past five minutes, he has been wondering if his father was alive, and he is now in too much of an emotional state to put two and two together.

**So Joseph said to his brothers, "Please, come near to me" so they came near and he said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt."** [Gen. 45:4]

It will take him a few seconds for Joseph to realize that they are not saying a word out of fear. He thinks that they have not heard him or don't believe that they have heard him. He asks them to approach so that they could examine his face and form and again tells him who he is. In looking at them, he sees the fear in their eyes and says:

### Joseph Explains Divine Viewpoint to His Brothers

**"And do not be distressed now or angry with yourselves [lit., in your eyes] because you sold me here. For God has sent me to preserve life before you."** [Gen. 45:5]

Joseph is in an emotional state, but he realizes what his brothers are feeling. He attempts to set them at ease. He realizes that they might be in fear for their own lives or that they now feel especially guilty for what they have done. Joseph sees the big picture. He understands that their motivations and actions were deplorable but that God saw to it that he was not only delivered but promoted to the second highest position in the land of Egypt. He is presenting them with the divine view of things; and why God allowed events to happen as they did.

**"For these two years, the famine [has been] in the midst of the land and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest." [Gen. 45:6]**

*In the midst of the land* does not refer to a place equidistant from the extremes of the land but is a reference to the entirety of the land. It is a phrase used by the Hebrews for emphasis and is often not even translated for that reason (e.g., the NASB, the NRSV, Owens' translation and the KJV).

Joseph almost cannot speak fast enough to explain what is happening and why he is not filled with anger and bitterness. His brothers are in mute shock. He knew exactly what they did and why God placed him in this position and caused the things to happen which happened to him. Joseph has arrived to a personal sense of destiny. He is not just some leaf blown erratically in the wind, but a man with a purpose in life, a destiny set up by God, a man guided by God, whose every step has been foreknown. It required what his brothers did to him to get them to this point.

This is not the classic *the means justify the ends* argument, because that is nowhere taught in the Bible. What we have here is God's overruling will which transcends human evil and motivation—in fact, which operates despite and even through human evil and faulty human motivation. There are hundreds of examples which can be given at this point. I have mentioned slavery in these United States in earlier studies. Whereas the gathering and selling of the slaves was unjust treatment and whereas some slaves (not all) in America received the cruelest of treatments at the hands of their owners, there were thousands of slaves, men and women and children, who found Jesus Christ in their slavery, to which their gospel hymns and songs testify. Many of them became mature believers. How many blacks who became free yet did not believe in Jesus Christ are now spending eternity in hell now value their freedom and their fight for freedom? Sometimes it takes extreme measures to reach some people and God thought it proper to, despite the evil motives, greed and intentions of some of those who bought and sold slaves, place an entire people under slavery in order to save their souls.

We have seen how out of jealousy and hatred and other mental attitude sins first decided to kill Joseph, then to sell him into slavery. This is absolutely wrong. However, God needed Joseph in Egypt to preserve the Egyptians and to provide a place for the Jews to multiply in while he allowed the degeneracy of those in Canaan to run its course (the Jews needed to be separated from the inhabitants of the land of Canaan just as Lot and his family needed to be separated from the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah). So God not only worked despite the brothers' evil motivations but actually allowed these motivations to move His great plan along.

Joseph is fully cognizant of all this and his only problem is how does he relate all of this to his brothers in a few moments?

**"Furthermore, God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors." [Gen. 45:7]**

V. 7b has several different translations. Owens goes with *and to keep alive for you many survivors*. The NASB translates this: *and to keep you alive by a great deliverance* and offers the alternate more literal translation *and to keep you alive by a great escaped company*. *And to keep alive for you many survivors* is the rendition of the NRSV. In a famine, or a world-wide (or possibly area-wide) depression, there will be a lot of suffering and death. God sent Joseph to Egypt to preserve his brothers and their families as the remnant; that is those that remain after such a thing occurs. From their family, Joseph will be able to keep most of them alive. It is possible that some of them died during the famine (see Gen. 46:12 and Zodiates mentions that Simeon's wife has also died; I just don't know where this is found).



God has a varied and complex reasons for allowing the famine on this earth. There were degenerate peoples who needed to die and this famine provided them that opportunity. Furthermore, their children, who would have normally been raised to become great degenerates, died prior to reaching the age of accountability and are now going to spend eternity with Jesus Christ. Joseph's family needed to be moved for a few centuries—this famine and Joseph's presence in Egypt afforded them that opportunity. There were people who had positive volition toward Jesus Christ in Egypt and they needed someone of Joseph's spiritual maturity to present the gospel to them. A world-wide or an area-wide depression touches the lives of every person in that area and God has a purpose in all of it that we can only sometimes guess. Joseph, however, knew without a doubt as to what his part in God's plan was and did not feel any resentment toward his brothers.

**"Therefore, it was not you who sent me here but God; and he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over the land of Egypt." [Gen. 45:8]**

We are unsure as to what Joseph meant by saying that he is a *father* to Pharaoh; BDB says that views differ much as to its meaning and a uniform interpretation would be impossible. This might be a technical title of Joseph, whose meaning has been lost over the millenniums. It is not the normal word for father, however. Joseph is not bragging but he is stating these things so that they could realize that there is no reason to feel guilty. Not only is Joseph in God's plan, but God has prospered him almost beyond imagination. Joseph had been in charge of Pharaoh's household, as we have seen, and was the acting ruler over all of Egypt. Pharaoh was still the ruler, however, under Joseph, things ran so smoothly that there was no reason for Pharaoh to do anything. Furthermore, this present Pharaoh was not threatened by Joseph with regards to power, respect or ability. A more petty person would have at first reveled in Joseph's ability and then become terribly jealous.

**"Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not tarry and you will dwell in the land of Goshen and you will be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have; and I will provide for you there for yet five years of famine so that you do not fall into poverty—you and your household along with all that you have.'" [Gen. 45:9–11]**

Although *make haste* and *go* are both in the Qal imperative, *say (to him)* is in the Qal perfect. The perfect tense is usually reserved for completed action; however, it can be used for future action so certain as to be referred to in past time completed action.

*You will dwell* and *you will be* are also in the Qal perfect. *I will provide for you* is in the Piel perfect, the intensive stem, the accomplished state; again, the future of Joseph's actions are considered so certain as to be rendered as completed action.

Joseph has probably been thinking about this for the past 6 months to a year and cannot speak fast enough. His brothers are still in shell shock, not able to believe that it is Joseph, feeling a number of different emotions. Joseph knew that if his father had sent his ten sons for food near the beginning of the depression, that he was in no way prepared for a depression and would not be able to last another five years. Besides, Joseph had a great desire to be near the family that he has not seen for twenty years and to provide for that family. He does not want his father to say no and provides every reason that he can to convince them to move to Egypt.

**"And now your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin for I am [lit., my mouth is] speaking to you." [Gen. 45:12]**

This is elliptical. Joseph could spend hours telling them of his glory and power, but he has no intention of doing so.<sup>143</sup> They can see with their own eyes; Benjamin can confirm this with his eyes what they are seeing; they can see it is their brother Joseph speaking to them. He is saying, *it is not for me to declare my wealth and prosperity; just tell our father what you see with your own eyes.*

---

<sup>143</sup> Bullinger points out Prov. 27:2 in support of this

### Joseph Gives His Brothers Marching Orders

**"You must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt and of all that you have seen; make hast and bring my father down here." [Gen. 45:13]**

Joseph asks them to look around them and take everything in—his majestic authority, his great wealth, his power and the respect given to him. Joseph wants them to take it all in, for them to recognize who he is and that he wants to care for them and their father.

**Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept and Benjamin wept upon his neck; and he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them and after that, his brothers talked with him. [Gen. 45:14–15]**

Joseph felt closest to Benjamin, who was his brother through his father and mother, and was also his baby brother. He first seizes Benjamin and they both cry a great deal over the lost years and their familia love for one another. Joseph then kisses his brothers, a custom of those days, and during the visit is when Joseph found out more about their trips home and exactly what Jacob had said and exactly how he was.

**Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that [lit., saying] Joseph's brothers have come; it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants. [Gen. 45:16]**

Again we have the word *qôwl* (קוֹל) [pronounced *kohl*] and it means *voice, sounds* but not necessarily words. However, it can mean articulated speech, which it does here.<sup>144</sup> It is reasonable to translate this *report, news* and some Bibles translate this simply as *voice* in this passage.

Up until now, no one really knew who these scruffy eleven individuals were that Joseph was unusual towards. Certainly there were rumors and questions around the palace as to what was going on and why would someone like Joseph have a cup hidden on an innocent man's donkey and then call him back to accuse him of stealing. It was very unusual behavior for Joseph. Suddenly, all of this falls into place for Pharaoh and his servants. Furthermore, they are vicariously thrilled at Joseph's reunion with his family. As Jesus Christ returned from the dead and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent will be reunited with the nation Israel, his brothers in the flesh, so was Joseph reunited with his own brothers after he had been, for all intents and purposes, dead in their eyes.

Everything that we have hears so far concerning this pharaoh sounds wonderful. He promotes Joseph over Egypt because of Joseph's leadership ability and his character, not because he is a relative, a friend, or a political favor to be paid off. He gives Joseph full authority and backs off of the decisions which Joseph makes. And here, Pharaoh and his servants are happy for Joseph and the reunion that he is having with his family.

**And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers [to] do this: 'Load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan and take your father and your households and come to me and I will give to you the best of the land of Egypt; and you will eat the fat of the land.'" [Gen. 45:17–18]**

*Go back* is actually two verbs in the Hebrew. It is the Qal imperative of *hâlak*<sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup>*], which means *to go, to come, to walk*; and this is followed by the Qal imperative of *bôw'* (בֹּאוּ) [pronounced *boh*] and it means *to come in, to go in*. Literally they are *to go and to enter into the land of Canaan*.

*You will eat* is in the Qal imperative; however, this is not an order, but an heterosis of moods—the imperative is used instead of the imperfect or perfect to indicate that this is Joseph's strongest desire that they are blessed by living in Egypt and living off the wealth (*fat*) of Egypt.

<sup>144</sup> See also Gen. 3:17 4:23 Ex. 3:18 4:19 etc.

Pharaoh did not know that Joseph had already spoken to his family and had told them to move to Egypt to be with him. The Pharaoh was more than generous and welcomed a group of people like Joseph to dwell in the land with them as Egyptians. This makes me think more and more that this Pharaoh would not have been a native Egyptian but from the Hyksos dynasty, the invading hoards which took over Egypt for a couple centuries. This Pharaoh sounds more likely to be the sort of person who would promote based upon ability rather than upon national heritage. Furthermore, when occupying a country, even when the occupation is intended to be a peaceful, benevolent rule, it helps to import those from without and to sometime export those from within.

**"You are commanded to do this: 'Take for yourselves from the land of Egypt wagons for your little ones and for your wives and bring your father and come. Give no thought to your goods [lit., let not<sup>145</sup> your eye look with regret upon your vessels] for the best of all the land of Egypt—it is all yours.'" [Gen. 45:19–20]**

Pharaoh is so pleased that he is ready and willing to roll out the red carpet on Joseph's behalf for his family. He does not know about Jacob's holdings in goods and land, but tells Jacob, through Joseph, to not worry about leaving anything behind because they will be provided with better in Egypt. To illustrate, Pharaoh is commissioning wagons to be lent in order to bring all of Joseph's family down to Egypt so that they do not all have to walk or ride donkeys.

**And the sons of Israel did so and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh and gave them provisions for the journey. To all of them he gave to each changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred silver [coins] and five changes of garments. [Gen. 45:21–22]**

The literal translation is that *Joseph gave them wagons according to the **mouth** of Pharaoh*. Often the mouth is used and is synonymous with *command, mandate or precept*. The Hebrew language often used parts of the body to refer to less tangible concepts.

The way the Hebrews used the plural of changes combined with Benjamin receiving five changes of garments, indicates that each of the brothers received one change of clothes and Benjamin received five (just as Benjamin received five times their portions of food). The noun is in the plural, but it still refers to a singular change of clothes. Furthermore, two nouns placed in regimen is a way of using the first noun as an adjective and a way of emphasizing the first noun.

Joseph gave Benjamin five times the food that the others received to see how they would react. His father always gave him a greater portion of everything than he did his brothers and it made them jealous. At the meal, they all relaxed and enjoyed each other's company. Here, the gifts to Benjamin are no longer a cause for jealousy and spite.

**To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread and provisions for his father on [lit., for] the journey. [Gen. 45:23]**

Joseph has to do more than just have his brothers relay to his father his position of power and wealth in Egypt—he sends proof. During a period of depression, sending wealth and signs of wealth is an unusual thing to do. However, Joseph has it to spare. He will keep his country afloat during the depression and still be blessed beyond his dreams during the depression. This is something that we should be cognizant of—God does not require us to live in a wealthy area during prosperous times in order to receive blessing from Him. God blesses us during any kind of catastrophe or disaster. He has reasons that He allows times of widespread suffering to envelop an area, yet we are still His throughout any kind of natural disaster and God is able to bless us materially, spiritually and every other way within any environment. Joseph illustrates to us the glory of God's blessing to an individual believer in the midst of an economic depression and this illustrates to us the concept of blessing by association.

---

<sup>145</sup> The negative is found in the Hebrew; the NASB left it out in their footnotes

Those associated with Joseph, his country, those of the Pharaoh's household, his family—all of these receive blessing because they are associated with Joseph and God is glorified when he prospers us.

God is not limited by having only \$100 billion dollars and once he distributes that, He is out of money and has to take some from one person in order to give it to another. God can give blessings of all kinds in any amount to any believer. However, notice, His greatest blessing goes to the one who is spiritually mature, who is filled with Bible doctrine, who has character and does not act out of petty vindictiveness and revenge.

**Then he sent his brothers and [as] they departed, he said to them, "Do not be agitated on the way." [Gen. 45:24]**

Several Bibles record that Joseph admonished his brothers *not to quarrel* along the way back to Canaan. However, he does not tell his brothers not to quarrel. They have just seen things that they had never thought they would see. There is no way they could have been prepared to run into Joseph and for him to have the power and yet have the grace that he had toward them. They are going to leave in somewhat of a daze and in this long journey back, they might, in their talking to one another, become worried, agitated or upset over what has occurred. They might over-think what has occurred and become afraid of Joseph; thinking that he is setting them up to be killed upon their return. The verb is *râgaz* (רָגַז) [pronounced *rawg-GAHZ*] and it means *to become agitated, to quiver, to be excited, to be perturbed, to be enraged, to quiver*. He wanted them to remain on a stable emotional keel, to be in control of their emotions and not to go off on some emotional tangent, whether it be one of fear, apprehension, excitement, etc. The ten brothers will have a range of emotions, and some of them will actually fear Joseph. Joseph is telling them not to give in to such distabling emotions.

### Jacob's Sons Tell Him That They Have Seen Joseph

**So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father and they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt," and he was stunned [lit., his heart fainted or his heart grew numb] for he did not believe them. [Gen. 45:25–26]**

There have been many times in my own life when I have worried about something or have been upset about something and sometimes a week later and sometimes several years later I found out that I had no need to be worried or upset because God has a perfect plan for my life and all these things had been taken care of in eternity past. My emotion state never helped or improved the situation or did anything in a positive way. It just revealed a lack of faith in God. All I had to do was to trust God and go along with His program.

Jacob has spent the past twenty years in grief and self-pity over his son Joseph. He should have grieved at this loss and perhaps this grief should have even lasted for several months. I realize that the impact of the loss of a son is almost beyond comprehension; however, Jacob knows Jesus Christ and he knows that Jesus Christ controls history. If his son Joseph had died at the hands of wild beasts, as he had been led to believe, then so be it. It was part of God's plan and he would see his son Joseph in eternity. Jacob should have trusted God, gotten over his grief, and moved on. Instead, he became a selfish, self-pitying, suspicious old man, miserable every day, holding onto Benjamin desperately in his misery. We will all go through times of human suffering due to loss and it is God's will for us to do so. We have to cling to God during those times and place our faith in Him. We have to live in the Word. It is not necessary that we understand why something terrible has happened, although, often when in His Word, we do find understanding. It is only necessary for us to lean on Him. Sometimes this requires some prayer but mostly this requires His Word...and today, it requires us to hear His Word as taught by a pastor-teacher whose position it is to teach God's Word.

What has happened it beyond Jacob's comprehension. He cannot imagine that his son Joseph is still alive. He has spent the greater portion of twenty years grieving over Joseph's death, being bitter toward his other sons because of this loss, worried that the same will happen to Benjamin. Jacob, who could have been a spiritual giant in his day, loss all his spiritual ground over this incident whereas it could have catapulted him into great spiritual growth and placed him on a spiritual plane with his son Joseph. He only needed to trust God in his suffering.

**But when they told him all the words of Joseph which he had said to them when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, then the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived.**  
[Gen. 45:27]

For such a thing to occur was just about beyond Jacob's wildest imagination. It was thoroughly unbelievable. Obviously, he was giddy beyond belief but how much greater this blessing would have been had he received it in a state of spiritual maturity as versus the state that he had taken himself to.

The use of wagons drawn by oxen was apparently quite new and they were certainly very expensive. This is not unlike sending a fleet of limousines today to pick up a family. They were almost unheard of in the land of Canaan and it was seeing these which confirmed in Jacob's mind that Joseph was alive and really did rule Egypt. Although I am unaware of any archeological evidence which supports the following, I would certainly concur with E. F. K. Rosenmüller that the plains found in Egypt would be far more conducive to the development of the wagon than would the geography of the land of Canaan.

**And Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."**  
[Gen. 45:28]

Jacob was overwhelmed by the news concerning Joseph. He became almost comatose for a moment, his mind racing with thoughts. It took a short time for his sons to convince him and then he raced to see his long lost son.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 46** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 46

### Genesis 46:1–34

**Introduction:** In Gen. 46, God once again comes to Jacob. It has been over twenty years since our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Revealed God, has appeared to Jacob. As a matter of great interest, God has not, so far, appeared at all to Joseph. Some would find this incongruous; however, Joseph clung to God's Word, which is living and powerful, and this is why his spiritual life had so much impact. We will also see the list of those who came to Egypt with Jacob and how they are assigned to the land of Goshen when they arrive.

#### Outline of Chapter:

- vv. 1–7 **Jacob and family travel to Egypt**
- vv. 8–27 **A list of those who traveled to Egypt**
- vv. 28–34 **Jacob and Joseph are reunited**
  
- v. 10 **Why Proper Names May Vary in Different Passages of Scripture**
- v. 26 **The Number of Sons and Grandsons Brought to Egypt**

### Jacob and Family Travel to Egypt

**So Israel took his journey with all that he had and he came to Beer-sheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac.** [Gen. 46:1]

This is about the first semi-spiritual thing that we have seen Jacob do in twenty years. The impression that is given is that after the loss of Joseph, he ceased to offer sacrifices to God. Although we have very little information about Jacob during these 20 years, the implication is, he had become a fairly bitter man, and he could not seem to let go of his son Benjamin, and he possibly blamed his other sons for the death of Joseph.

It appears that Judah separated from the family during this time and was possibly brought back to the family due to the famine over the land.

Even here, our Lord Jesus Christ is called the God of his father, Isaac, suggesting perhaps a lapse in spiritual growth and communion. Jacob was the kind of person who must receive blessing and then he is thankful to God for what he received. A more mature believer, such as Paul had learned to be content no matter what state he is in. On the negative side, he begins this journey with a certain lack of faith. Joseph has told him, "*Do not concern yourself with your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.*" (Gen. 45:20) Nevertheless, it will appear that Jacob in this chapter is careful to bring everything that he had.

**And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob" and he said, "Here am I."** [Gen. 46:2]

This vision was unlike any that Jacob had experience over the previous forty years. In this vision, God says to Jacob what He has said to only three others in the Old Testament and will say to seven persons altogether. He

doubles Jacob's name, as he did when He called Abraham (Gen. 22:11), and as he will call Moses (Ex. 3:4) and Samuel (1Sam. 3:10). It is a great emphasis upon the person who has been called.

I would like to tell you that this is a great sign of spiritual growth when a believer is called by God and he then says, "Here I am" but we see by the context that Jacob has been a self-centered, bitter old man for much of the previous twenty years without very little thought given to God.<sup>146</sup>

However, after twenty years, he is now back in fellowship, and, if he has any sense whatsoever, he is thankful that God did not kill him during these years of waste. Notice that we have no Scripture written about him during this time because he was not writing God's Word at that time. You do not write God's Word while you are out of fellowship. It is possible that Jacob authored this, his last chapter, in the Bible, and it was later edited into this portion of God's Word by Moses. It is equally likely in his visits with Joseph that he told this to Joseph, as this is the Jacob's only personal moment in this chapter. Given the carefully constructed and very cohesive narrative, it seems much more that a person very adept at writing assembled and wrote the final 10+ chapters of Genesis.

**Then he said, "I am God—the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt for I will make a great nation of you there." [Gen. 46:3]**

Nothing is said about Jacob's misgivings, but he obviously has some. He has made his life in the land of Canaan and it is difficult to pick up and move after living in the same place for fifty or so years. The land of Canaan has made him rich and prosperous and he has a large family. One might even interpret the end of Gen. 45 to suggest that Jacob is only thinking of just going to visit Joseph.

God here is clearly telling him here to move to Egypt. God's plan and Joseph's desires are fully in line because Joseph is in fellowship and a mature believer. Divine guidance is easy for a person who is growing in grace.

What appears to be the problem is, in the land of Canaan, there are many negative influences on the sons of Jacob, which we have studied in previous chapters. God is going to isolate the sons of Jacob in one area in Egypt, which is, apparently, a better and more moral environment.

**"I will go down with you to Egypt and I will bring you up also again and Joseph shall put his hand upon your eyes." [Gen. 46:4]**

When God speaks to Jacob and tells him that *I will bring you up again*, He is referring to restoring Israel to the land of Canaan, but not this is not to be taken literally by Jacob; Jacob, in this life, will never return to the land of Canaan. Joseph will bury his father in Egypt. The last phrase is idiomatic for Joseph being with his father when his father dies. It was the custom in the ancient world for the nearest of kin to close the eyes of one who had just died.

**Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba and carried the sons of Israel: Jacob, their father, their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. [Gen. 46:5]**

Before going to Egypt, Jacob first took his family to Beer-sheba, which is along the route, and the southernmost city before leaving Canaan. It was when he left Beer-sheba that God first came to him in a dream (Gen. 28). He has been out of touch spiritually for a long time and it will take a lot for him to recover. His first thought is to geographically go to where God had come to him.

It is very possible that Jacob stopped momentarily in Beersheba, unsure about moving ahead, very unsure about leaving the Land of Promise. He remembered something about God bringing him to the land of Canaan to settle in for God was going to give this land to his seed; yet it seemed as though he was now being called to Egypt. This time in Beersheba firmed up in his mind just exactly what was the geographical will of God.

---

<sup>146</sup> This is an educated guess on my part.

**They also took their cattle and their goods which they had gained in the land of Canaan and came into Egypt—Jacob and all his offspring with him:** [Gen. 46:6]

When everything is taken as Jacob did, this means that he is not returning to the land of Canaan. How great were his misgivings? Did he clearly plan to move to Egypt not ever to return? We do not know for certain. However, at this point, he is moving to Egypt for a period of time, at the very least.

It is possible that Jacob traveled about to pick up some herds of cattle being tended to other than his immediately homestead. He was not leaving anything behind because he was not returning to it—not at anytime in the near future. This occurred approximately 1660 B.C.

**His sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters and all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.** [Gen. 46:7]

Jacob left behind no possession of value and left behind none of his descendants nor his sons' wives. We are about to get a list of all those who came with him to Egypt. We will still not cover his twelve sons in depth until we get to Gen. 49.

## A List of Those Who Traveled to Egypt

**Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel who came into Egypt: Jacob and his sons. Jacob's first-born Reuben. The sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.** [Gen. 46:8–9]

Reuben named his first-born after a grandson of Abraham by Ketura (see Gen. 25:4). Hanoch is mentioned in Ex. 6:14 and 1Chron. 5:3 and his descendants in Num. 26:5. Hezron is found in this passage, Ex. 6:14 1Chron. 5:3 and Num. 26:6. He had a cousin by the same name (Gen. 46:12). Pallu and Carmi are found in similar portions of the Bible and Pallu may also be known as Peleth (Num. 16:1)<sup>147</sup>

**The sons of Simeon: Jamuel (or Nemuel), Jamin, Ohad, Jachin (or Jarib), Zohar (or Zerah) and Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman.** [Gen. 46:10]

These sons are also named in Ex. 6:15 Num. 26:12 and in 1Chron. 4:24. Jachin is Jarib in 1Chron. 4:24. Jachin's name means *He shall establish* and was born when Reuben began to experience some spiritual growth. Ohad's name is not found in the parallel lists of Num. 26:12–14 or 1Chron. 4:24–25. Zohar is also called Zerah in Numbers. As above, we know practically nothing of these individual sons. They enjoyed prosperity by association but none of them rose above the wealth that God gave them.

A concern of some people are the different names for the same people in the Bible. There are several reasons for this:

### Why Proper Names May Vary in Different Passages of Scripture

15. Many people have two names that they are known by—as often occurs at birth, when a son is named after his father, he is given a nickname (such as Junior) in order to distinguish him and his father when they are called for dinner. Sometimes a particular name is given to honor a relative, but no one really likes that name so they are called by their given name. Some take on a nickname for a myriad of reasons and are known by that nickname.
16. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, there is a different alphabet and the letters do not transliterate letter for letter; so there is a certain amount of improvisation that must occur. We see this in the English. Even though there is no *J* in Hebrew or Greek, I believe there are more people in the English Bible whose name begins with *J* than any other letter.

<sup>147</sup> According to ZPEB



### Why Proper Names May Vary in Different Passages of Scripture

17. With respect to the vowels: there were no vowels in the original Hebrew Bible and none were added until centuries after the incarnation. Whereas certain words in the Hebrew were obvious, since these words were still used, such is not the case with a name which might occur two or three times in the Bible. These pronunciations were carried by the *oral tradition*, which spanned several millennia. It is not inconceivable, given most everyone's attitude toward long lists of names of people about whom we know very little, that some of the pronunciations were lost or forgotten or done incorrectly.
18. In some places a consonant might be doubled and in others it is not; this doubling of a consonant is done by a little dot in the middle of a letter (called a dagesh); like vowel points, this little dot can be difficult to see due to an old manuscript, or one can see a dagesh where one does not exist.
19. Some Hebrew letters look very similar. I have provided a list below:

ב	B (or V) Beth (Veth)	ג	G (Gimel)	כ	K (Kaf)	נ	N (Nun)
ד	D (Dalet)	ר	R (Res)	ך	K (Kaf) <sup>148</sup>	פ	P (Pe) <sup>2</sup>
ה	H (he)	ח	Ch (Het)	מ	M (Mem)	ת	T (Tav)
ט	T (Tet)	ם	M (Mem)	ס	S (Samekh)	פ	P (Pe)
ו	V (Vav)	ז	Z (Zayin)	ן	N (Nun) <sup>149</sup>		

20. When this is added to manuscripts which have seriously deteriorated, obliterating small portions of a letter or embellishing a letter with a mark; and if less than perfect printing occurs, it is easy to see how these names could be changed drastically.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

**The sons of Levi: Gershon (or Gershom), Kohath and Merari.** [Gen. 46:11]

Although we know nothing about Gershon, his tribe had specific duties with regard to the tabernacle (Num. 3). When the conquest of Canaan was well under way, they were assigned to the Northernmost portions to minister to Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Manasseh (Josh. 21 1Chron. 6). They continued to play a part in the history of Israel throughout the monarchy, the dispersion and the return from exile.

Kohath's direct descendants are mentioned in Ex. 6:18 Num. 3:19, 27 1Chron. 6:2. His later descendants played a large part in the ministry of the Tabernacle and were assigned to various areas in the promised land (Josh. 21 1Chron. 6).

Merari's immediate descendants are mentioned in Num. 3:20 and the family duties are mentioned in the same places as his brothers. The Levites in general handled the spiritual side of Israel and their close proximity with God's Word gave them spiritual growth.

**The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (however, Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.** [Gen. 46:12]

We have studied Er and Onan in Gen. 38; Perez and Zerah were twins (Gen. 38:29–30). Shelah was Judah's only remaining son by his first wife.

<sup>148</sup> At the end of a word

<sup>149</sup> This is how nun looks at the end of a word.

Perez and Zerah were his by his former daughter-in-law, Tamar.

Hezron was given the same name as his second cousin, a son of Reuben, and his family is mentioned in Num. 26:21 Ruth 4:18–19 1Chron. 2 Matt. 1:3 and Luke 3:33. This places him in the line of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Hamul, his brother, is only found in a couple of the common genealogical lists.

**The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvvah (or Puvah), Job (or Iob or Jashub) and Shimron.**  
[Gen. 46:13]

Tola, Puvah, Job and Shimron are mentioned simply in geological lines (Num. 26:23–24 1Chron. 7:1–2). Job is also called Jashub in Numb. 26:24. It would be wonderful to tell you that this is the Job of the Bible and that we have already seen his friend Eliphaz earlier in our study of Genesis, but there is no mention of Egypt, the twelve tribes of Israel or anything of that nature in the book of Job. However, what we do find is the similar names, which indicates that this is probably from the same era (it is possible that the incidents of the book of Job took place during Israel's enslavement to the Egyptians).

**The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon and Jahleel. These are the sons of Leah whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram together with Dinah, his daughter. Altogether his sons and his daughters [number] thirty-three.** [Gen. 46:14–15]

The sons of Zebulun are only mentioned here and in Num. 26:26. We do not even find Zebulun mentioned in the 1Chron. genealogies.

Excluding Er and Onan, I am counting 32; if the wives of the sons of Jacob are excluded and Leah is included, then there are 33; or there might be another unnamed daughter. The Septuagint does not provide us with any additional names.

**The sons of Gad: Zaphon (or Ziphion or Zephon) and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon (or Ozni), Eri and Arod (or Arod) and Areli.** [Gen. 46:16]

First off, you may be wondering where all the *and*'s came from. Actually, with the exception of the sons of Levi<sup>150</sup>, every name is adjoined by the conjunction *and* in the previous genealogies. Here they are joined literally according to the Masoretic text. Whether this is a way to vary the writing somewhat or whether there is a reason for this change, I do not know at this time. These sons of Gad are mentioned but twice: here and Num. 26:15–18.

**The sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah, and Serah, their sister; and the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel.** [Gen. 46:17]

As most of these, their names are mentioned, but we know nothing of their lives. Here are men which began the great race of Israel, who led, as far as we can tell, undistinguished lives.

Only Beriah's children are mentioned, which is because he is probably the only son who is married.

**These are the sons of Zilpah whom Laban gave to Leah, his daughter and she bore these to Jacob; sixteen persons.** [Gen. 46:18]

Here all sixteen which are mentioned are listed.

**The sons of Rachel, Jacob's woman: Joseph and Benjamin.** [Gen. 46:19]

---

<sup>150</sup> There is only the final *and* in the line of Levi

Rachel is the only one in this list called Jacob's *wife* or *woman*. Jacob had one right woman and she was one with whom he fell in love with early in life. He favored his youngest sons, Joseph and Benjamin, not only because they were his youngest but because they came from his right woman. Some men might envy Jacob that he had three other wives, all of whom were probably attractive in that era; yet there was but one woman for him and that was Rachel. Because of his ambivalent feelings toward his other three wives, he felt less toward their sons, even though they represented his first-born sons. Because of the interaction of sin natures involved, God allowed Jacob to have all four of them as wives and the line of Jesus Christ came through Judah and the line of Moses was through Levi. Still, none of Jacob's children came even close to the spiritual maturity of Joseph.

**And to Joseph were born in the land of Egypt, whom Asenath the daughter of Potiphara the priest of On, bore to him: Manasseh and Ephraim.** [Gen. 46:20]

Joseph received Reuben's double portion—that which is usually reserved for the first-born—as his sons are often referred to as separate tribes; that is we never hear of the tribe of Joseph; we hear of the tribe of Manasseh and the tribe of Ephraim. Since there are twelve sons of Israel and there are twelve tribes of Israel, these two tribes are often referred to by theologians as half-tribes.

**And the sons of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi (or Ahiram) and Rosh, Muppim (Shephupham) and Huppim (Shuppim) and Ard.** [Gen. 46:21]

Benjamin had many sons and this verse indicates that he did not just sit around Jacob's house doing nothing. He had a wife and spent most of his time thinking up funny names for his sons. It is very possible that, because Jacob kept Benjamin close at hand, that he did spend more time with his wife.

**These are the sons of Rachel whom she bare<sup>151</sup> to Jacob, fourteen souls in all.** [Gen. 46:22]

The number of sons here matches with the number of sons mentioned in this passage.

**The sons<sup>152</sup> of Dan: Hushim (or Shuham). The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel (or Jahziel) and Guni and Jezer and Shillem (Shallum). These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter and she bore these [children] to Jacob; seven souls in all.** [Gen. 46:23–25]

If you add up the 33, 16, 14 and 7, we have 70 altogether. However, two sons died in the land of Canaan and Joseph's two sons were born in Egypt, so those who came into Egypt who were directly related to Jacob were 66 altogether (Joseph is already living in Egypt). There is that additional person unaccounted for from Leah's children and my guess is that this is another daughter. I need to double check on my counting here.

**All the persons who came into Egypt belonging to Jacob who were his direct descendants (lit., who came out of his loins), not including the wives of the sons of Jacob were sixty-six persons in all.** [Gen. 46:26]

This method of adding up the number of people who went with Jacob into Egypt excludes his sons wives, Joseph's sons born in Egypt and Judah's sons who died in Canaan, Jacob and Joseph. This chart may help:

The Number of Sons and Grandsons Brought to Egypt					
Reuben	Simeon	Levi	Judah	Issachar	Zebulun

<sup>151</sup> *Whom were born to* is how this is often translated, but it is found as I have translated it in the western Samaritan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the targum of Onkelos (which is perhaps the oldest Aramaean version extant).

<sup>152</sup> This is perhaps in the singular according to a special class of variant readings which textual critic Dr. Ginsburg attaches great significance to.

4	6	3	5 <sup>153</sup>	4	3
Gad	Asher	Joseph <sup>154</sup>	Benjamin	Dan	Naphtali
7	7	2	10	1	4

The sons of Jacob who came to Egypt were 11 (Joseph already lived there); plus Jacob himself, and there were 54 grandsons and great grandsons who also came Egypt—this gives us 67 in all. Therefore, 66 are Jacob's descendants who come down to Egypt at this point in time.

## Jacob and Joseph Are Reunited

**And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two (lit., two souls); all the persons of the house of Jacob that came into Egypt were seventy.** [Gen. 46:27]

This includes Joseph's sons, Jacob and Joseph. Acts 7:14 reads **Joseph sent and invited Jacob, his father, and all his family to come to him, seventy-five persons.** Here we have eliminated Joseph, Jacob, Joseph's two sons (which takes us to sixty-six) and add in nine wives (two wives have died—Judah's and Simeon's) and Joseph's wife is obviously not included. In other words, exclude Jacob, Joseph and Joseph's family, and we have 70 people, as we find here, which would have been the entire house of Jacob that moved to Egypt. This also explains how other passages might have 75 persons mentioned (see Ex. 1:5 Acts 7:14).

**And he sent Judah before him to Joseph to point out before him in Goshen and they came into the land of Goshen.** [Gen. 46:28]

They had already been given the land in Goshen so the family of Jacob did not travel to where they last saw Joseph but directly to the land of Goshen to settle in.

**Then Joseph prepared (lit., tied or harnessed) his chariot and went up to meet Israel, his father, in Goshen. So he consented to be seen by him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck for a long time.** [Gen. 46:29]

This tells us that the headquarters for Joseph was south of Goshen, as the use of *up* and *down* in this portion of Scripture seem to pretty well correspond to north and south. All of this would be along the Nile. Joseph would have been, for all intents and purposes, the ruler of southern Egypt.

In v. 29, we find the Niphal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *râ'âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AW*], the very popular and widely used verb meaning *to see*. The Niphal is the passive voice, meaning that Joseph has allowed his father to see him. If we wanted an audience with the vice president of the United States, clearly not the second highest ranked man in the United States, we would not expect to gain an audience with him. He would have to consent to being seen. Joseph, although he is in charge of the granaries, does not handle every transaction personally. He has had authority vested in him and he vests authority in others. A good executive cannot deal with every single detail. However, here, he has chosen to spend the time with his father; he is allowing himself to be seen. This same verb form is used when God appears to someone (see Gen. 12:7 35:1).

**And Israel said to Joseph, "Let me die now since I have seen your face that you are still alive."** [Gen. 46:30]

This is idiomatic. Jacob is not asking to be killed, but he has fulfilled his dream of seeing his son whom he thought had been dead for the past twenty years. Jacob is back in fellowship and he is called Israel now.

<sup>153</sup> Two of his sons died in Canaan.

<sup>154</sup> Joseph already lived in Egypt and had two sons by an Egyptian wife, obviously (Gen. 46:20).

**And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh and I will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have come to me.'" [Gen. 46:31]**

It was Pharaoh who had personally asked Joseph to bring his family to Egypt and Joseph had planned to do that anyway, having the power to make such a decision. However, as a matter of courtesy and as a point of information, Joseph will personally travel to where Pharaoh is and inform him that his family has arrived and that they are settling down in the land of Goshen.

**"Furthermore, the men are shepherds for they have been cattlemen. Their flocks and their herds and all that they have they have brought." [Gen. 46:32]**

All this information will be given to Pharaoh because he needs to know what kind of people his family are. The Egyptians looked down upon those who kept livestock as someone in a rich neighborhood might look down upon his next door neighbor if he started keeping a flock of chickens in back. This would be much akin to a school district in which I taught; a person on welfare and living in housing who went to Kingwood, a master planned community in Texas, would be looked down upon because many of the children there came from fairly well-to-do families. This would be similar to an exclusive neighborhood which has a vacant lot and someone pulls a trailer up into the lot and plugs it in. Joseph is not ashamed of his family nor does he look down upon them, but he has to be clear to Pharaoh as to how they make their living and to work through whatever problems might occur because of the social mores of that day.

We do not know why exactly the Egyptians despised the shepherd. Egyptians revered the cow and cattle were used for labor and for food. Tending to cattle and oxen was necessary as any other part of life. Several theories have been proposed: (1) the Egyptians may have objected to the vagrant, seemingly undisciplined lifestyle that a shepherd led as opposed to their orderly caste system; (2) the shepherd may have seemed to be continually unclean, whereas those who tended to cattle in a fixed area who were Egyptian, paid more attention to bathing; (3) they had possibly been recently invaded by hordes of cattlemen, descended from Cush (the Hyksos?) and bore prejudice against cattlemen for that reason. These men burned down some of their major cities and had perpetrated many cruel acts against the Egyptians.

**"And it shall be when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' You will say, 'Your servants have been cattlemen from our youth even until now; both we and our fathers.' [This will be done] in order that you may live in the land of Goshen for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." [Gen. 46:33–34]**

It is obvious that Pharaoh is less concerned with social rank than would be his citizenry. This tends to be the case with people who are in power or who have made their struggle to the top long ago. They are not concerned about their position and they have no reason to act superficially toward those who are not in their social rank. However, those who have worked hard to achieve or are in the midst of trying to attain some goal have a more difficult time with something like this. Goshen is apparently occupied by very few Egyptians and is far away enough from the metropolitan centers of Egypt to enable to the sons of Israel to dwell peacefully with the Egyptians despite the prejudice that they will incur.

However, Joseph chose to use this deep-seated prejudice in his favor. He chose a fertile land not occupied by many Egyptians so that his people could continue to grow and prosper, still set aside to God. Again, apart from hatred and mental attitude sins, there is nothing here which suggests that it is wrong for races to voluntarily segregate themselves from one another. In this case, it was God's plan.

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---

**Genesis 47** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 47

### Genesis 47:1–31

**Introduction:** Gen. 47 is a chapter which speaks of great changes in the land of Egypt. Joseph never allowed the country to become socialistic or communistic. Every year that grain was needed, those who needed it had to pay some sort of a price. It was not distributed freely, except to the priests. Furthermore, those who paid everything that they had for this grain were grateful. They did not have their hands out and then complain when not enough was given to them; they were grateful that Joseph kept them and their families alive.

Also in this chapter we will see Joseph settle his family in the land of Goshen with Pharaoh's permission and Jacob will enter into the dying phase of his life. Because of his words and actions, I have often had to draw conclusions as to his spiritual state. I am certain there are some people who questioned this. In this chapter, we can tell by his period of dying that his life was a spiritual mess.

**So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers with their flocks and their herds and all that they possess have come from the land of Canaan. They are now in the land of Goshen."** [Gen. 47:1]

This is all proper protocol which Joseph is displaying here. He has informed Pharaoh of his being reunited with his family and Pharaoh told him to bring the family to Egypt. Now that they have arrived, they are of a significant enough number to work out whatever legal details must be worked out in order for them to dwell in the land of Goshen.

**And from among his brothers, he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph's<sup>155</sup> brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Shepherds—your servants [are] as our fathers [were]."** [Gen. 47:2–3]

Joseph did not want to fill Pharaoh's room with all of his family, but he did want to bring a significant number of them and those who would make a good impression on Pharaoh. This is a formal introduction to the leader of the land who will make a legal determination as to where these immigrants will stay.

**And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land because there is no pasture for the flocks which belong to your servants for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Therefore now, we ask you, please allow your servants to dwell in the and of Goshen."** [Gen. 47:4]

Egypt had an immigration policy; even though Pharaoh had personally suggested to Joseph to bring his family to Egypt, there was still the formality of officially meeting the potential citizens and determining their part in the land of Egypt. Foreigners did not just arrive in a country and settle in wherever they felt like. Furthermore, a large group such as this could even pose a potential threat to the country's security so this meeting is proper immigration procedure during those times. Jacob's family formally state their occupations, reveal their respect for the authority of the land, and formally state their requests for area of residency.

---

<sup>155</sup> The western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syrian all read *Joseph* instead of *he*

**Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you; the land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. Furthermore, if you know any able men among them, assign them as princes of the cattle which belong to me." [Gen. 47:5–6]**

Pharaoh is not a man of prejudice. He is too realistic for that. When in high school (as a student and not as a teacher), I had certain prejudices against all kinds of people; I had a very narrow social circle that I approved of and a lot of groups that I thought very little of, in my narrow way of thinking. However, when I began teaching, I found that there were all different kinds of kids, all different kinds of groups, and found that it would be quite counter-productive to hold any prejudices toward my young people. Although there is a widespread prejudice against those who shepherd livestock, Pharaoh recognizes their ability in this field and would entrust his own herds with these men.

**Then Joseph brought in Jacob, his father, and placed him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. [Gen. 47:7]**

We have here the Piel imperfect 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *bârak*<sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced *baw-RAK*]. The verb means *to kneel* but by implication, it means *to bless*; when it is God blessing man, benefits are implied; when it is man blessing God, respect and celebration are key. According to Strong's it can also be used euphemistically *to curse* God or a king. The word often was used in greeting or in parting. We find this word used over 400 times in the Old Testament. **[See the doctrine of blessing--in progress!]** In blessing Pharaoh, Jacob is asking that God provide spiritual and material prosperity for Pharaoh. This is a matter of respect and polite behavior and its strength varies by the person giving the blessing.

**And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning [are] 130—few and evil have been the days of the years of my life and they have not attained to the days of the years of my fathers in the days of their sojourning." [Gen. 47:8–9]**

The Pharaoh is making polite conversation, not knowing many people who command the respect that Jacob does and being the age that he is.

Jacob is somewhat bitter about his life, although he has only himself to blame for being the spiritually corrupt person that he is. Jacob has made a lot of wrong and selfish choices as a believer and has just spent twenty years in perpetual misery due to the loss of Joseph. He did not turn to God for comfort nor was he willing to let his son go in his heart. Therefore, he has spent day after day in bitterness and self-pity. He knows that he did not live as long as his forefathers and he knows that he does not have a lot of time left.

**And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went of from the presence of Pharaoh. [Gen. 47:10]**

Joseph, like every normal son, looked up to and respected his father and a person like that would want those around him to know his father also. So despite Jacob's faults, which are many, Joseph still has love and respect for his father and is not ashamed of him. Those who are ashamed of their parents are the ones with no capacity for life or love.

**Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them possession in the land of Egypt in the best of the land, the land of Rameses as Pharaoh had commanded. [Gen. 47:11]**

This sounds as though this might give us some sort of clue as to when this all occurred; like this follows the Ramses rule, which occurred around 1314 B.C., which is over a century after the exodus. Quite frankly, I cannot recall what the Ramses rule is at this time.

What is most likely is that the Pharaoh Ramses I took his name from the city (some of you have heard of Chevy Chase, right?).



**And Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food [lit., bread] according to the number of their dependents.** [Gen. 47:12]

Joseph, as the leader of the land, was allowed to provide for his family from what he brought in for Egypt. It is one of the benefits of ruling a country. It is because of him that the people of Egypt did not starve and, even though it cost them everything to remain alive (as we will see), they were grateful to keep their families alive.

**Now there was no food [bread] in all the land for the famine was very severe. Furthermore, the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.** [Gen. 47:13]

We are not told how widespread this is—Joseph's description here may simply be what he personally is aware of. We are told elsewhere, **Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.** (Gen 41:57; ESV) This suggests that the famine took in far more than Canaan and Egypt.

We have seen in the United States how it is possible for one area to receive torrential rains and for another a couple hundred miles away to receive a third of their normal rainfall. Joseph is concerned with the land of Canaan and Egypt and this is what he writes about. We do not know if the famine went further or not.

Joseph seems to, more than any of the previous authors, throw in a word here and there not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Languish is one of those words. It is the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of *lâhahh* (לָהָה) [pronounced *law-HAH*] and the BDB and Strong's do not altogether agree on the meaning or the spelling (BDB spells it לָהָה which is not too different). Strong mentions that the base of this word is *to burn*, which is likely as surrounding this word are various words that mean *to burn*. However, because it occurs only here, it is difficult to ascertain its meaning. I'll give you the two views, and the supply you with my view. BDB says it means *to languish, to faint* and doesn't add too much detail. Strong's points out the root word's meaning and adds that, by implication, it means *to be rabid or insane or to languish because of exhaustion of frenzy*. Now, what affects the land in that region more than anything else under an agricultural society is rain or the lack thereof. No rain means that there are no crops, which means there is no food, which results in a severe depression. The lack of rain along with probably a summer heat wave caused the land and its inhabitants to suffer from hunger and heat exhaustion and the land would not bear any crops. So it is my opinion this is more akin to the man in a desert dying of no water and heat exhaustion. In this picture I think we have a better concept of the meaning of *lâhahh*.

In case you are concerned about the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular; the subject of the verb is *the land of Egypt; the land of Canaan* is added as an afterthought and it follows the verb.

**So Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.**

[Gen. 47:14]

Some people will have problems with this verse and several which will follow so I think that it will be important to make a few points here:

### What We Learn from Joseph Selling the Grain

1. The Bible nowhere supports a welfare state.
2. When the Apostles and their disciples kept all things in common during a portion of Acts, this was a time of great prejudice and persecution and this was accomplished in a small, limited setting, and based on the agreement of all involved.
3. Joseph did not make the famine a secret; anyone would brought the grain to him in the form of taxes knew what was going on and, therefore, any of these could have put aside grain for themselves in case of famine, following Joseph's lead.
4. Since they did not (at least, most people did not), their only means of sustenance was to purchase grain from Joseph.

## What We Learn from Joseph Selling the Grain

5. There is nothing wrong with a country taxing its citizens and then charging for the services that it provides out of the taxes. A government does not produce anything, so a government has limited means of acquiring wealth.
6. It is this policy of Joseph's which kept the people of Egypt alive.
7. Because the people of Egypt did not expect a handout, they were glad to pay for their food to keep their family alive; now for some contemporary application:
  - 1) We are allowed to put money aside for emergencies.
  - 2) We are allowed to draw from that money during emergencies.
  - 3) We are allowed in our youth to save for our retirement.
  - 4) Some people do so and some work extremely hard or are extremely thrifty and manage to put aside money for their retirement.
  - 5) Most everyone has that opportunity.
  - 6) We do not owe anyone else the benefits of our labors; that is a matter of free will.
  - 7) When it comes to charity, giving money to any cause or giving money to the church, that is a matter of free will (we, as Christians are to give to our local church as we are prospered—which does not mean that only the rich should give) and the Bible does indicate that charity is encouraged.
8. There was a limited amount of money set aside for the widows and orphans in the land (3.3%/year); and provision made for farms to leave the corners of their fields unharvested, so those without means could come to these fields to harvest (which people were often widows and orphans—see the book of Ruth).
  - 1) By way of application, we have made a grave error in judgment in the United States by devoting a quarter of our federal budget to welfare type programs. This has encouraged slackness on the part of Americans, which is a very bad idea.
  - 2) Furthermore, this also encourages people to lie to the United States government in order to receive said benefits.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, and all the Egyptians<sup>156</sup> came to Joseph and said, "Give us food; why should we die before your eyes for our money is gone." [Gen. 47:15]**

The translation here is not literal, but the gist of the meaning is accurate. Note that these people know that Joseph has set this food aside for them; however, they have spent all of their savings over the past few years for grain, hoping that the third year would be better for them.

**And Joseph answered, "Give your cattle and I will give food<sup>157</sup> to you in exchange for your cattle—if your money is gone." [Gen. 47:16]**

Whereas, there is a place for welfare, we have made it almost a right, and we have generations and groups of people in the United States who gravitate toward handouts as opposed to gravitating toward self-sufficiency. Joseph knows that there are three or four more years of famine to follow and he does not want to turn all of Egypt into a welfare state where everyone expects to be provided for no matter what. If they provide him with cattle, he has his brothers who can take care of them, on behalf of Pharaoh.

**So they brought their cattle to Joseph and gave them to Joseph; food in exchange for the horses, the livestock of the flocks, the livestock of the herds and the donkeys; and he supplied them with food in exchange for all their cattle in that year. [Gen. 47:17]**

<sup>156</sup> This is literally *all Egypt*; this is a metonymy where the land stands for the inhabitants therein

<sup>157</sup> *Bread* is added as per the Septuagint and the Samaritan text

This is the first mention of the horse in the Bible; during this time, insofar as we can ascertain, they were used primarily to draw chariots and the like. We have clear evidence that they were ridden a couple centuries later; we do not know about this period of time, however. Hammurabi's law (circa 1750 B.C.) does not mention the horse; but it seemed to suddenly spread throughout Asia, Egypt and the land of Canaan within the next fifty years, being used in the Hyksos dynasty not too many years prior to Joseph. The Bible later mentions riding a horse in Gen. 50:9 so it is even possible that riding in the land of Egypt originated during the time of Joseph (and it is possible that with their introduction, horses were almost immediately ridden).

Many quadrupeds are known for their stubbornness; and horses are quite powerful and dangerous when they do not like what you are doing with them. No doubt the bridle was developed sometime around this era, which is key to controlling a beast as large as a horse.

**And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent and there is nothing left of the herds of cattle in the sight of my lord; [we have nothing left] but our bodies and our lands." [Gen. 47:18]**

By this, the fourth or fifth year, the citizens of Egypt knew the drill. Grain was not provided for free. All they had in exchange for grain was their land and themselves. When they went to Joseph, they told him this.

**"Why should we die before your eyes; both ourselves and our land. Buy us and our ground in exchange for food; and we with our land, will become slaves to Pharaoh; therefore, give us seed that we may live and not die and that the land may not be desolate." [Gen. 47:19]**

The people had their families to feed and they were willing to exchange what they had in order to keep their families alive. Selling oneself into slavery in exchange for food or some other material benefit has unfortunately gone by the wayside, thought to be barbaric and demeaning. Reduce our welfare programs and a modification of this might be just what our economy needs.

There are a number of young people who have no money and need training in some field; allowing themselves to be trained in exchange for slave wages for several years would instill the virtues of discipline and hard work into their souls. Such virtues could deliver these children from a lifetime of poverty.

**So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians [lit., for in Egypt, every man] sold each their field because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. [Gen. 47:20]**

Notice that Joseph did not go out and *nationalize* all of the land; he purchased this land for a fair price. The Pharaoh, through blessing by association, is becoming the richest man in history up until that time and for many years after.

**And as for the people he brought them into bondage as slaves [or, and he removed the people; me made them slaves to the cities] from one end of Egypt to the other. [Gen. 47:21]**

The exact translation is marred by some textual differences; the NASB reads: *And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other.* The NRSV reads: *As for the people, he made slaves of them from one end of Egypt to the other.* Obviously, our problem is we either have the word *slaves* or the word *cities*.

There was no welfare in that era as we know it. If a man desired food, he had to work. Since he was unable to work on his farm, then he had to work for Joseph. Their welfare program was tied directly to works. How many people on unemployment or on welfare today, given a chance to work as a slave for the state, would suddenly be able to find employment in the private sector? And those who could not would be given the opportunity to earn their food through public works. Very likely, Joseph or Pharaoh instituted great building projects with this workforce.

**Only the land of the priests did he not buy because of a statute. For the priests had a statute from Pharaoh and they ate [according to] their statute which Pharaoh had given them; for this reason they did not sell their land.** [Gen. 47:22]

Chôq (חֹק) [pronounced *khoke*] is found here for the first time but later found throughout the Torah and the remainder of the Old Testament perhaps 150 times. It is usually translated *statute*. However in this passage only we find it translated *statutory-portion, allotment, portion, fixed allowance*. Whereas, I am not perfectly happy with my translation, I will offer you some others:

Rotherham: Only the ground of the priests bought he not—for the priest had a **statutory-portion** from Pharaoh, and they had been eating their statutory-portion, which Pharaoh had given them, for which cause they had not sold their ground.

NASB: Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an **allotment** from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment [lit., *ate their allotment*] which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land.

Owens: Only the land of the priest he did not buy for a **fixed allowance** to the priests from Pharaoh; and lived [or, and ate] on the allowance which...gave them Pharaoh. Therefore, they did not sell their land.

Although an exact translation is difficult to ascertain, the meaning of the several translations seem to agree that there were statutes already in place which protected the priest of the land from having to sell their land. According to these statutes, they retained the land and were fed at public expense.

The next question is what kind of priests are we dealing with? Are they all heathen or all *Christian*? Likely there was a mixture. The book of Job, from very roughly this era, tells us that the family of Abraham was not the only group of believers in Jesus Christ. In Genesis, we have seen King Melchizadek, who was a believer and not related at all to Abraham. In about 400 years, Moses will meet a priest of Midian and marry one of his daughters; and it is clear that this priest worships the Revealed God.

**Then Joseph said to the people, "See that I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh; how here is seed for you and you will sow the land and it will be at the harvests you will give a fifth to Pharaoh and four-fifths shall be your own as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households and as food for you little ones."** [Gen. 47:23–24]

This was the legal proclamation which Joseph gave.

It is possible that there were two types of slaves: those that were taken into the cities for public works projects (v. 22) and those who were given their land back on which to sow and harvest, although one-fifth of the harvest would always come back to Pharaoh, as Pharaoh now owned the land. This was quite fair; there were no free lunches no handouts, and these were executive decisions that the people could live with. This also indicates that rain had returned to Egypt. The famine that was on them had begun to lift somewhat. However, as it always is with a depression, the effects and the depression take time to go away, even after the cause of the depression has been removed.

**And they said, "You have saved our lives. Let us find grace in the sight of my lord and we will be slaves to Pharaoh."** [Gen. 47:25]

This is such a refreshing change from the people today who believe that the state (i.e., the taxpayers of the state) owe them a living, housing and food. When they do not receive what they believe is due to them, they are arrogant and dissatisfied. These people recognize that the state owes them nothing and that the state had the foresight to put grain aside for a situation like this and they are therefore grateful. The alternative is that their children and wives and family would all die. They are giving tacit agreement to this enactment of Joseph.

**So Joseph made it a statute to this day concerning the land of Egypt: the fifth to Pharaoh. Only the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's.** [Gen. 47:26]

Joseph is probably writing this in retrospect, many years later. During his time in office, he may have had very little time to write Scripture.

**Now Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the land of Goshen. And they gained possession and were exceedingly fruitful and multiplied.** [Gen. 47:27]

We have entered into a new topic here. We have dispensed with Joseph and the depression specifically and will deal with Jacob and family living in Egypt.

Since the sons of Jacob were in God's geographical will and since they were in close proximity to Joseph, God greatly prospered his sons and their families here. Notice that they are in the midst of a depression and they are having many children and they have become very prosperous. God can bless us individually under any circumstances.

**So Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so were the days of Jacob: the years of his life 147 years.** [Gen. 47:28]

Jacob has entered into the dying phase of his life. He is no longer productive; he is not one who is actively guiding his children. He knows that he is dying and he now takes care of the things which he must take care of prior to his death.

**And when the days of Israel drew near [and he was about] to die, he called his son Joseph and said to Him, "Please, have I not found grace in your sight? Please place your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and truth. Please do not bury me in Egypt."** [Gen. 47:29]

Jacob is well aware that God did not give Egypt to his progeny but He gave the land of Canaan to his family as a possession forever. Jacob knows that he will be raised from the dead and does not want to be buried in this place where he is only staying temporarily. He is sojourning in Egypt but God has given him the land of Canaan. So he does not want to be buried in Canaan. He is asking Joseph to take a solemn oath and to grant him this wish out of kindness and to insure that he will do it (truth).

**"But let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place." He answered, "I will do as you have said."** [Gen. 47:30]

Jacob wants to be buried with Abraham and Isaac in the land of Canaan, in the land of his birth, in the land that God has given him as a possession forever.

**And he said, "Swear to me" and he swore to him. Then he bowed himself to Israel upon the head of his bed.** [Gen. 47:31]

Joseph, as the ruler of Egypt, still has great respect and deference toward his father.

---

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 48** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

# Genesis 48

## Genesis 48:1–22

## Jacob Blesses the Sons of Joseph

### Outline of Chapter:

**Charts:** [Interpretations of Gen. 48:21–22](#)

**Introduction:** Gen. 48 is the first meeting between Jacob and his two grandsons by Joseph. They will be considered part of the twelve (actually, thirteen) tribes; there will not be a tribe called Joseph. This is Joseph's double portion, which is usually reserved for the first-born. As has often occurred in the Bible, Jacob will bless the younger over and above the older.

**And it came to pass after these things that one said to Joseph, "Behold, your father is ill"; so he took his two sons with him, Manasseh and Ephraim.** [Gen. 48:1]

We are dealing with Jacob's last days on this earth and they are covered in detail in this and the next chapter. Obviously he was too old to write any of this; he could barely see (Gen. 48:10), as he was suffering from cataracts (that is an assumption on my part).

Because of his various duties, Joseph had not yet brought his sons to his father for his blessing. However, this information concerning his father's illness indicated that there was not much time left.

**When it was told to Jacob, "Behold, your son Joseph has come to you," Israel then summoned his strength and sat up in the bed.** [Gen. 48:2]

Jacob was obviously near the end if he could only sit up having summoned his strength. In our youth, we take for granted the physical prowess which we have.

**And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty had appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and He blessed me."** [Gen. 48:3]

Jacob could have been a spiritual giant like Moses or David or his grandfather Abraham. Instead, Jacob squandered most of his life. It is only during these last few years that Jacob became more oriented to life and to his purpose in life. He, in his old age, had more time to contemplate God and God's promises to him.

Here, Jacob recalls when God appeared to him when Jacob first entered into a stage of maturity in Gen. 35. It is likely that Jacob recounted other instances of God appearing to him. He is now occupied with the person of Jesus Christ, something, unfortunately that did not occur a century ago. Had that happened, most of Genesis would have been about Jacob rather than about Noah, Abraham and Joseph. Jacob is holding onto God's promises.

**And He said to me, "Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession." [Gen. 48:4]**

God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give the land to their descendants as a possession forever and that their descendants would be like the sand in the sea. All three patriarchs would have been better off to have seized that promise with all of their might; to believe that promise and to live as though they believed that promise.

**Application:** With respect to our own selves—the Bible is filled with promises made to us as believers, either directly or by implication. It would behoove us to grab onto these promises and hold onto them and to believe them and to conduct our lives with faith in these promises. It is actually a youthful step in one's spiritual walk, but a positive step toward spiritual maturity and one that very few Christians ever make. In fact, about the only thing Christians seem to know how to do is, when they get in trouble or they are under pressure, they may attend church a little more faithfully and they will pray like the dickens for God to remove their discipline and/or pressure.

**"And now your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt; they are mine, Ephraim and Manasseh as Reuben and Simeon are to me." [Gen. 48:5]**

What is being said here is that these two young men will be tribes of their own, placed with the other eleven tribes just as though they were on an equal footing with Reuben and Simeon.

Jacob is not claiming possession of these children in such a way that he is keeping them at his home from hereonout, but he is adopting them as per the ancient custom of adoption. They will be considered tribes in their own right although they had come directly from Jacob's loins. It is a simple matter of they are a part of the tribes of Israel. How did Jacob know this? He was occupied with the person of Jesus Christ and these things came to him.

**Application:** How would we learn such things as these? We need to live in the Word. Every believer needs approximately an hour of God's Word every day. For most believers, this seems like such an imposition. Having been under that kind of a ministry for two decades let me report to you that the only imposition which I had was when I went my own willful way in opposition to God and God's plan; the only time that I wasted in Bible class were the times I did not listen as well as I should have. Those days were among the best years of my life, as are these with even more time spent exploring God's Word.

Just so there is no misunderstanding, you will not have the prophetic ability of Jacob, where you can look at your two grandsons and tell their future; but, you will be able to read historical trends.

**"And your offspring which you will sire after them will be yours by the name of their brothers they shall be called in their inheritance." [Gen. 48:6]**

**I don't quite have a handle on the meaning of this verse**

**"However, for when I came from Paddan, Rachel died upon me in the land of Canaan on the way when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)." [Gen. 48:7]**

Here, Jacob recalls a portion of his life. The association which is being drawn here is that Rachel was his favorite of his wives. In fact, there was no comparison and Jacob, had it been God's plan, would have been content to have married Rachel only. In his adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim, Rachel now has three tribal representatives: Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh.

**When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" [Gen. 48:8]**

Jacob is nearly blind by cataracts (my assumption) and all he can barely see through the haze of his lenses. He likely realizes who they are, although he cannot see them well. Joseph has brought his children before his father for his father to pronounce a blessing upon them.

**And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me that I may bless them." [Gen. 48:9]**

This is a formal act where Jacob, guided by God the Holy Spirit, both blesses the boys and prophecies as to their future. We do not have a similar function today because God speaks only to us through His Word (which is primarily taught to us by means of a pastor teacher). Note the superiority of having God's Word in your soul as versus having seen God and God's miracles. Insofar as we know, God has never manifested Himself to Joseph and He has manifested Himself several times to Jacob; however, there is no comparison between the spiritual life of Jacob and Joseph. For Joseph, God's Word is in him and he has used his positive volition to obey God in his soul. Jacob, on the other hand, has seen God in his divinely inspired dreams and has been promised directly by God, and his life, with the exception of a few portions here and there, has been almost entirely worthless, since he has been so self-centered and pre-occupied with self pity. However, now that we are at the end of Jacob's life, it is as if he has become a different man. He is wise, spiritually discerning, and in control, despite the weakness of his body.

**Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age so that he could not see so he brought them near him and he kissed them and embraced them. [Gen. 48:10]**

This is the verse which tells us that Jacob's vision has become dim with old age, which is a perfect non-technical description of cataracts, a clouding over of the lens and the lens sack in the eyes (again, this is my diagnosis).

**And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to [ever] see your face and here, God has allowed me to see also your children." [Gen. 48:11]**

Jacob spent twenty long years in self-pity and sorrow over Joseph. It is normal to sorrow over someone that you love and lose. That sorrow may even go on for several years. However, after a year or so, you must go on living and this sorrow must remain in your heart and not something which colors everything that you do.

The first verb here is the Piel perfect of *pâlal* (פָּלַל) [pronounced *paw-LAHL*], which means, in the Piel *to judge* and in the Hithpael *to pray*. In the Piel, it appears to mean that one has examined the facts, has thought over the situation, and has made a judgment call or a determination based upon this examination of the facts. When one man sins against another, God reviews the facts and makes a determination concerning the outcome. Several translations, as you can observe, when with *mediate*, which is a reasonable translation here, but does not square with its used in Gen. 48:11 or Psalm 106:30. This is not the common word for *to judge*; (as a verb or noun). Strong's #6419 BDB #813.

**The Joseph removed them from his knees and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. [Gen. 48:12]**

There are two ways of viewing this passage. (1) This occurs perhaps 10 years before Jacob's death; and he, like his father Isaac, believes that he is about to die; and so he calls Joseph in, along with his two sons. Then Joseph's sons would still be very young at this point, around age ten or so; and they were sitting on his knees as he sat either at the edge of Jacob's bed or on a chair facing Jacob's bed. (2) Jacob gives this message near the end of his life, and the two boys are in their 20's. In that case, perhaps Joseph is sitting in a chair (or whatever), and each son is next to him, perhaps on their knees, and next to Joseph's knees.

**And Joseph took them both, Ephraim on his right hand toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand and brought them near him. [Gen. 48:13]**



The sons whom is taken by Israel's right hand will receive the lion's share of blessing as the first-born. This was the tradition. Joseph, well aware of this, brought his children to his father to be blessed in that way.

**And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim who was the younger and his left hand upon the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands; for Manasseh was the first-born.** [Gen. 48:14]

As has previously been the case in Biblical history, the second-born has been the one who has received the double portion or the greater spiritual blessing. God knows how they will behave in future years and God leads Jacob to give the greater blessing to the youngest, Ephraim. We will later see in the examination of these two tribes that Manasseh seemed to be the most degenerate of the two tribes.

We have seen this before; and you may ask, "What's the deal? What is the point that is being made?" There are social conventions which exist and natural advantages that some people have—but these things mean nothing in the spiritual life. This does not mean that the second-born child is the best or has some kind of advantage, spiritually speaking—he doesn't. Our lives in the Christian realm goes beyond human advantages and social customs; God trumps human advantage.

There is not true advantage in life apart from the fundamental advantage of believing in Jesus Christ. For the believer, there are not advantages in the Christian life apart from growing in grace and doctrine. Having a soul filled with doctrine, so that you think like God thinks, that is the great advantage of the believer in life.

**And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God—whom my fathers walked before, Abraham and Isaac; the God Who has led me all my long life to this day; the Angel Who has redeemed me from all evil—bless the lads and let my name be perpetuated in them and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."** [Gen. 48:15–16]

Here we see that the Hebrew word for father is clearly used to mean predecessor and not father, per se. We have the Trinity in this verse; the God whom Abraham and Isaac walked before is God the Father; and the God who has led Jacob his entire life is God the Holy Spirit; and the Angel who redeemed Jacob (and Who dislocated his hip) is Jesus Christ. Jacob is asking that Joseph's sons become tribes as will Reuben and Judah become.

This is the first time that we are exposed to the word *redeem*; it might be a good idea to at least have an abbreviated doctrine of *Redemption* right here (**not finished yet**), which we will take up again in Ex. 13:13. *Redemption* is one of the key doctrines of Scripture; therefore, in the book which contains the seeds of all the great doctrines, we should expect to find *redemption*.

I should also insert here a chart of all the great doctrines which find their genesis in Genesis (**not finished yet**).

**When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him and he took his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.** [Gen. 48:17]

Knowing about Jacob's general spiritual condition over the years, Joseph assumed that old age just had the better of Jacob and he did not know exactly what he was doing in giving precedence to the younger child. However, Jacob was led by God the Holy Spirit here and was properly indicating to which tribe would be the greater blessing.

**And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father; for this one [is] the first-born; place your right hand upon his head." However, his father refused and said, "I know my son I know; he also will become a people and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his brother, the younger, shall be greater than he and his descendants will become a multitude of nations."** [Gen. 48:18–19]

Jacob reveals here that he is not just some confused old man, but this is actually one of the more lucid times in his life. He can see into the future better than he can see across the room and God the Holy Spirit is leading here in this blessing of Joseph's sons.

**So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you, Israel will pronounce blessings, saying God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh and in this way he put Ephraim before Manasseh." [Gen. 48:20]**

This introduces a side note: Biblical authors often spoke of themselves in the third person, the most notable exceptions being Solomon in Ecclesiastes and Luke in his two books. Here, in front of Joseph and his two sons, Jacob refers to himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. Why did the authors not all write in first person; or at least a greater number of them?

1. What is important is the message, not the person.
2. Genesis, with its several authors and its span of perhaps 2000 years, would have been confusing if every author wrote in the first person. We would have the toughest time unraveling what was going on; so God the Holy Spirit either made it common practice in writing in those times to be in the third person, limited omniscience, as a general rule; or else He simply inspired these men to write in this way.

It would now be an ideal time to examine **the Doctrine of Ephraim and Manasseh—finished**

Jacob tells Joseph that he is not losing his mind and he is not senile here, but is fully capable of realizing what he is doing and whom he is giving precedence to. You may wonder how this preference takes place. The first leader of the nation Israel once the twelve tribes entered the land was Joshua ben Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. One would assume the first leader would come from the tribe of Reuben or Judah, but, by their behavior and lack of character, they lost out.

**The Israel said to Joseph, "See, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers." [Gen. 48:21]**

Here, Joseph is a metonym for his progeny. Joseph himself will never set foot in the land of Canaan again; not in this life. His bones will be carried to Canaan by Israel as a sign to them that God fulfills His promises.

**"Moreover, I have given to you one mountain slope [lit., shoulder] rather than to your brothers which I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow." [Gen. 48:22]**

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

There are three possible interpretations of this verse:

#### Interpretations of Gen. 48:21–22

1. At some point in time, Jacob by force took some land in Canaan; land to which he still has a deed. This portion of land would be specifically for Joseph. This particular piece of property has been alluded to previously in Scripture. Obviously, we do not have the story behind this.
2. This is a reference back to Gen. 34 where a Hivite rapes Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and Simeon and Levi take revenge on the Hivites for this incident. Although it is clear that they took possessions and wealth from the Hivites, there is no indication that they took any land. The problem with the first two interpretations is that, Jacob is now living in Egypt and he no longer has any claim on any land from Palestine. He has no land to give to Joseph and Jacob really took no land with his sword and bow (insofar as we know).

### Interpretations of Gen. 48:21–22

3. The correct understanding of this verse is as follows: this is a prophecy. Because we think in terms of past, present and future, we lose the nuances of the Hebrew, which deal primarily with completed and uncompleted actions, apart from a time element (that is, a completed action or an action viewed from its completion, can be future). What Jacob has promised here is an additional portion to Joseph. Joseph will get the double portion generally given to the firstborn (he was the firstborn of Rachel). Both Manasseh and Ephraim will be given their own separate territories. However, here Jacob promises Joseph that he will give him an additional piece of land. This will be fulfilled when Manasseh takes a portion of land in the east (which was taken from the Amorite) along with his portion in the west. This will all become official in the second half of the book of Joshua.

---

---

### Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

---

**Genesis 49** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 49

### Genesis 49:1–33

Outline of Chapter:

- v. 1–28 **Jacob blesses and prophesies about each of his sons**
- Vv. 29–33 **Jacob's burial instructions**

**Introduction:** Gen. 49 is Jacob's deathbed greatness. Although Jacob was quite hardheaded and spend much of his life out of fellowship, he certainly had his moments and this is one of them. He, under the direction of God the Holy Spirit, tells of the characteristics which are integral to his sons and how these traits will impact their heirs.

Jacob is dying, he can barely see, yet, under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit on his deathbed will have great mental clarity. He obviously has been thinking about these things for some time and has put together a poem, if you will, although it is not completely clear if Jacob wrote this in advance or if he just said these things on the spot. This comes from Jacob's great mentality and the spiritual growth which he has experience over the past couple years. Jacob has the background of growing, retrogressing, growing, retrogressing. Here, he is at a spiritual peak, able to both prophesy and to speak poetically. He is not in a trance state speaking as a robot, but God's Word comes out of his mouth in his vocabulary, from his thoughts, with his own emotions and predilections functioning normally. I pray to have this kind of mental clarity at my death so that my dying grace is not wasted on me.

Many times, I have expressed doubts as to the mental clarity of Jacob; but I believe that it is clear that these are not just words that he is speaking, but what he says here is of great import and is inspired by God. In examining his life, Jacob is a picture of grace. He was a chiseler early on in life, but he was a believer. God gave him grace due to his salvation and because of his grandfather Abraham. However, I don't know that we can simply classify this poem of his as inspired by God. Being recorded in God's Word is not the same as saying it is inspired. My biggest problem is with Zebulun, which we will get to eventually. However, why would God the Holy Spirit include this in Scripture if it was not meaningful?

Jacob will speak to each of his twelve sons, often making a play on the meaning of their names, often looking at their present personality type and projecting that into the future. Moses does something similar in Deut. 33 and we will examine that passage when pertinent to this study and in more detail when we arrive to the point in Deuteronomy.

### Jacob Blesses and Prophecies about Each of His Sons

**Then Jacob called his son and said, "Gather yourself that I may tell you what will befall you in the latter days." [Gen. 49:1]**

Although both Owen and the NASB translate the last couple words as *days to come*, we have the feminine noun 'achāryth (אָחַר־יָת) [pronounced *akh-ar-EETH*] and it means *last, latter, end, after-part, close*. With the preposition

b<sup>e</sup> (ב) and the noun for *days*, it should read *in the latter days* or *in the last days*. The infinitive of the verb *to come* is nowhere to be found in this verse.

This is the first occurrence of this famous phrase, *the latter days*. This is not always a reference to exactly the same thing. It can refer to (1) the end of the rule by Gentile nations in Dan. 2:28–10:14; (2) Israel's final rebellion against God and the tribulation (Deut. 4:30 31:29 Ezek. 38:16 Hos. 3:5); (3) the first advent of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2 1Peter 1:20) (4) the end of the church age (2Tim. 3:1 James 5:3 1Peter 1:5 2Peter 3:3)<sup>158</sup>; and (5) the resurrection (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 11:24 w/ 12:48) (John is the only Apostle to record this use of *the last day*, as employed by our Lord).

**"Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel, your father:  
"Reuben, my first born, you [are] my might and the first fruits of my virility  
"Pre-eminent in pride and pre-eminent in power." [Gen. 49:2–3]**

Unlike his father and grandfather, Jacob had many sons and all of them were Jews; meaning all of them were believers in Jesus Christ, although many of them did not grow much beyond the salvation stage. Reuben is the first-fruits of his strength; or, in this context, the first-fruits of his virility. The word is *'ōwn* (און) [pronounced *ōne*] and Owen renders it *strength*, but BDB translates it as *manly vigor, strength or wealth*. Reuben is the first in a long line of sons to come, yet would be considered first in line when it comes to the double portion and pre-eminence. However, Reuben only held this position for a short while early in life. His failure came when he and his brothers plotted to kill Joseph. Although he did what he could to protect Joseph, it was a half-hearted attempt which showed lack of leadership. There is a point at which you must draw the line between right and wrong and there is no in between. What the brothers intended to do to Joseph was completely wrong; there was no middle ground between their plotting to kill Joseph and Reuben understanding the Joseph should be free. As the oldest brother; as their federal head, Reuben should have stood up to his brothers and freed Joseph. He was not alone in his realization that what they were doing was wrong—he just did not have the internal fortitude to take a stand here.

You may recall the instead of requiring Joseph to be cut free, Reuben instead took the middle position between death and freedom, and suggested that Joseph be sold into slavery. Even though that may appear to be a middle ground choice, it was still wrong and unfair.

**"Irresolute [and spineless] as water, you will not have preeminence  
"because you went up to the beds of your father  
"Then you defiled my couch that you [lit., he] went up to." [Gen. 49:4]**

The first word is difficult because it is found only here in the Bible. *Pachaz* (פחז) [pronounced *PAHK-az*] has its counterpart in the verb *pâchaz* (פחז) [pronounced *paw-KHAZ*] and it is found in Jud. 9:4 and Zeph. 3:4. BDB gives the definition as *wanton, reckless*. The feminine noun is found in Jer. 23:32. I personally do not buy this *reckless* definition. It does not seem to fit exactly. The key word here is *water*. This is the simple Hebrew word for water—not rain, not ocean, not ice—simply water. Water has the characteristics that it is transparent and it takes the shape of whatever container it is placed in.

When Reuben slept with his father's concubine (Gen. 35:22), he showed a total lack of a moral center. He did not realize that he was crossing over a line that should not be crossed over. He acted out of lust and with no moral focus.

In Judges 9:4, Abimelech does not have seventy men who follow him because of his leadership capabilities; he hires mercenaries—men who, for a higher price, would turn against him. They had no moral center, no sense of loyalty—the container they were poured in was that of a mercenary loyal to Abimelech. With a little more money, they could be poured into a container loyal to his enemies.

<sup>158</sup> I may want to review these. Perhaps it refers to any time during the Church Age?

Jer. 23:25–32 is the Lord speaking against the false prophets. These false prophets are men whose hearts are filled with deception even to the point of deceiving themselves (v. 26). Their intention is to make the people forget the Lord's name (v. 27). They lead the people astray with their lies and their lack of a moral focus; their lack of a true loyalty to God, Whom they do not even know. These false prophets are not even the slightest benefit to Israel (v. 32). Zeph. 3:4 is also speaks of false prophets—specifically those in Jerusalem and they are called treacherous men and *pâchaz* is also applied to them. These are moral relativists. They are not related to truth, to what is right. You place them in a new situation and their actions and their concept of right and wrong change accordingly. These men are all unstable, malleable, transparent, supposed to be related to truth but lacking a true morality. Hence, this word should be translated as *irresolute, unsubstantial, amoral, inconsistent, unreliable, corruptible, unreliable, spineless, and/or unprincipled*. Reuben had two points in his life of which we are aware when it was time for him to have a backbone, to stand up for what is true and correct, to show leadership abilities through stability and morality. He was unable to do so and following the sale of Joseph into slavery, we never hear about Reuben in a leadership position again. When trying to convince his father in Gen. 46 that they must return to Egypt and that he would leave his sons as hostages, Jacob ignores the suggestion. Jacob knows that Reuben's word means nothing; change the circumstances and what Reuben stands for also changes.

A minor point: there are times when the third person is used instead of the first or the second (in this case, the second) as context and identity has already been established. We find this also in Isa. 54:1 Lam. 3:1 and Micah 7:18. This sort of thing is done for emphasis.

Reuben's tribe is mentioned first in the early lists, e.g., Ex. 1 and Num. 1; however, in the lists of the tribes which follow, Reuben is no longer given preeminence and leadership was vested in the tribe of Judah (we see a kernel of that in Gen. 44 and it begins to take place as soon as Num. 2:3). The tribe of Reuben, along with the tribe of Manasseh and Gad, were so far north that they began to act independently of the rest of Israel, losing their focus of why God had made them a peculiar people, losing focus of Jesus Christ their eternal savior. As a tribe, notice this lack of stability and lack of a moral focus, just like their father.

**"Simeon and Levi, brothers; their swords [are] weapons of violence**

**"Come not into their council, O my soul**

**"Be not joined to their company, O my spirit**

**"For in their anger, they murder a man and for their [personal] pleasure they hamstring an ox.**

**"Curse be their anger for it [is] fierce and [cursed be] their wrath, for it is implacable.**

**"I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." [Gen. 49:5–7]**

The KJV and the NASB both read *in their self-will, they...*(hamstrung an ox). *The Emphasized Bible* and Owen use the word *wantonness*. The word is *râtsôwn* (רָצוֹן) and it means *goodwill, favor, acceptance, will, pleasure*. It is very similar to the Old English use of the word *pleasure*. The retired English aristocrat is sitting in his sitting room; he is thirsty and his servant asks him "What would be your pleasure, sir?" It is an exercise of free will to attain something which is desirable. It is difficult to translate a word like this with one word. *Self-will* is definitely involved, but it is a degenerate, sick sort of self-will.

In many families, there will be some brothers who are closer than others. Some may be more similar in interests and temperament. So it was with Simeon and Levi. They were quite similar and made most of their decisions together. In Gen. 34, we saw how that degenerate Shechem raped their sister Dinah, and then had the audacity to ask for her hand in marriage. However, Simeon and Levi are so outraged that they murder the entire male population of Shechem (Shechem's home town). This is excessive to say the least. These men got carried away by their emotions, lost complete track of what is right and wrong, and committed a much greater sin against the people of that area. In v. 6, it would be common for us to say that they killed men and oxen, but the use of the singular is a means of showing emphasis in the Hebrew. This figure of speech is known as *heterosis* (pronounced *HET-e-RŌ-sis*).

When Reuben was unable to lead the sons of Israel, then Simeon would have been next in line followed by Levi. We find out from this passage that whatever cattle which they were unable to steal from these people, they

viciously killed and allowed the beasts to suffer. However, neither one stood up on behalf of Joseph and neither one, when Judah was trying to convince Jacob that they had to return to Egypt, took part.

When speaking of their wrath, the word *qâshâh* (קָשָׁה) [pronounced *kaw-SHAW*] is used and it properly means *to be dense and hard* and therefore comes to mean *severe, fierce, implacable*. This means that had anyone sat these two brothers down prior to this rampage, they would not have listened. You cannot talk sense to people such as these two brothers—when they are angry, they will act out of their anger without regard for right or wrong or reason. Part of the problem was the combination of the two brothers. They worked each other up and they overlooked sound judgement when they were together. What God did was separate the two tribes by the tribe of Judah, the country of Moab and the Dead Sea so that there was no adjacent portion of their territories.

During the desert wandering, the tribe of Simeon was the hardest hit, falling in population from 59,300 adult males to 22,100 adult males. Even the second generation of the half-tribe of Manasseh was larger at the end of the forty years of wandering.

To help to keep them under control, they were apportioned an area in the midst of the land of Judah in Josh. 19:1. What they actually received was a portion of the inheritance which went to Judah (Josh. 19:9). Due to their genetic predilection toward irrational violent behavior, they needed to be monitored and adjacent to people who are generally rational and clear thinking, so God placed them within Judah. Whereas they did retain a tribal identity, much of Simeon was absorbed by Judah and Moses does not even mention this tribe in his familial dissertation in Deut. 33.

People do change and generations do change; David was supported by a larger number of Simeonites (7100) than Judites (6800) in the early monarchy (1Chron. 12:24 2:5). However, due to their close proximity, the two tribes became so enmeshed that the tribe of Simeon is not mentioned in many of the tribal lists in the book of Judges and it is absent from the books of Samuel and Kings.

Jacob prophesies that they will be separated or divided as tribes. At this point in time, they spent a great deal of time together and were a bad mix. God the Holy Spirit obviously recognized this and promised Simeon and Levi that they would be divided. This separation of the two tribes had a very positive affect on the tribe of Levi. Moses and Aaron were both descended from the tribe of Levi, the former being one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. The entire priesthood, the spiritual guardians of Israel, came from the tribe of Levi. The Levites were not given a particular plot of land, but were scattered throughout Israel. Whereas Jacob recognized the split of the tribes, he did not see in the future the great spiritual prominence that the Levites would hold. Deut. 33 deals with the spiritual side of the tribe of Levi, who taught the Law and presented the various offerings to the Lord. This is what is known as progressive revelation—the position of the tribe of Levi was to come much later (400+ years later); apparently they were not ready yet to receive this sort of information. They required the constant control and influence of Moses in order to function properly. Without his strength of character, they were a group of amoral vigilantes.

What Jacob predicted was surprisingly on the money. When the tribes were given their inheritance, Levi was scattered throughout the land, not holding any contiguous parcel of land, but occupying cities in tandem with the tribe who was apportioned that area (Joshua 21). They were a precursor of the Israelites in general, who would later be scattered throughout the world, just as the Levites were scattered throughout Israel. Simeon, on the other hand, was not scattered throughout Israel, but was not given a particular parcel of land as the other tribes, but received some cities out from the inheritance of Judah (Joshua 19:1–9). Simeon appeared to occupy territory completely within the tribe of Judah.

**"You are Judah—your brothers will praise you  
 "Your hand [will be] on the neck of your enemies  
 "Your father's sons will bow down before you  
 "Judah [is] a lion's whelp from the prey.  
 "My son, you have gone up, he stooped down, he crouched as a lion  
 "And as a lioness who dares [lit., shall] rouse him up." [Gen. 49:8–9]**

V. 8 begins with a paronomasia, which is where two words sound similar, but they do not necessarily mean the same thing. Judah is pronounced *yeh-hoo-DAH* and praise is pronounced *yaw-DAW*. All of his sons were given names which had meaning and throughout this dissertation, he will use various Hebrew phrases closely akin to the names of his sons.

Jacob spends more time speaking about Judah than any other tribe, outside of Joseph (who is now actually two tribes). Judah has shown himself to be the leader of the brothers. It was he who convinced his father to allow them to return to Egypt with Benjamin and he was involved with most of the negotiations with Joseph. Judah is not yet the leader of his brothers, although he is exhibiting all the characteristics of a leader. It from Judah that the line of David and Solomon will come to rule over Israel during her golden age.

The neck is often a picture of the volition of man (just as the bit in the mouth of a horse turns the neck of the horse, which in turns controls the entire body). The direction that the head turns in, which is on the neck, is a picture of volition. One who has control of the neck denotes superiority and control of the volition. This phrase *your hand on the neck of your enemies* means that Judah will have control over her enemies. They were be subservient to Judah. We have a similar use of the word neck in Job 16:12, 2Sam. 22:41, Psalm 18:40 and Lam. 5:5.

**"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet  
"Until He comes to Whom it belongs  
"And to Him the obedience of the peoples." [Gen. 49:10]**

The scepter is the rod of tribal supremacy. Even though Jacob became several tribes, there still had to eventually be some system of rule and order and supremacy, and that fell into Judah's lap. Judah, by a great act of being willing to take the place and the punishment of his youngest brother, became a Christ figure.

The true kingdom of the Jews was Judah, which was ruled by the seed of Judah, until the end of this kingdom in approximately 583 B.C. The second verse might read *until Shiloh comes* or *until He comes to Shiloh*. The word in question, the one transliterated Shiloh, is Shīylōh (שִׁילֹחַ) [pronounced *shee-LOW*] and it is by changing the vowel points that we get *until He comes to Whom it belongs*. An English rendering from the Septuagint is *A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins until there come the things stored up for him; he is the expectation of nations*. *The Emphasized Bible* reads: *until he come in as a Shiloh*.

This is one of those times I don't want to venture to strong an opinion. I wouldn't be surprised if Shiloh turns out to be a transliteration of an Egyptian word as there does not appear to be any Hebrew word which is close enough to this to help us with its meaning. In any case, it is clear that someone is to come, and that is when the staff will depart from Judah. Furthermore, most early Jewish commentators believed this to reference the Messiah.

Judah is not in a rulership position at this time so this passage, in effect, prophesies the rulership in the line of David. Our Lord Jesus Christ's humanity came from the line of Judah, but his divinity was from the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ will rule over Israel as the Son of David, eternally. We have a very similarly-worded verse in Ezek. 21:27: *This also will be no more until He comes whose right it is; and I will give it [to Him]*. In both cases, we have a prediction of the rule of our Lord in His second advent.<sup>159</sup>

**"To the vine binding his foal, to the choice vine he was his donkey's colts  
"His garments are washed in wine  
"His vesture [is washed] in the blood of grapes  
"Darker his eyes than wine  
"And whiter his teeth than milk." [Gen. 49:11–12]**

<sup>159</sup> See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, p. 108, for more information



Notice that we are no longer talking about Judah but about He Who will come after Judah, when the scepter shall depart from the hand of Judah, and this person is to be identified with two colors: red (the blood of grapes), which speaks of judgement and His spiritual death; and white, which speaks of His purity. When speaking of grapes, these are crushed to make wine, as He will be crushed for our sins; yet his teeth are mentioned, a sign of tenacity and strength.

The tying of his donkey and his donkey's colt with a choice vine indicates royalty.

**"Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea  
 "And he will become a haven for ships  
 "And his border will be as far as [or, unto<sup>160</sup>] Sidon." [Gen. 49:13]**

This verse is somewhat confusing as maps show that Zebulun was landlocked by Asher and Naphtali. This is described in Joshua 19:17–23, but there is today confusion as to where all of these boundaries actually were. ZPEB points out a possible textual corruption. Josephus implies that the boundaries of Zebulun went from Gennesareth to the land belonging "to Carmel and the sea."<sup>161</sup> Moses implies that the wealth which Zebulun would receive in the future shall come through the seas in Deut. 33:19. Isa. 9:1 tells us that this had not been fulfilled in Isaiah's time, but would be fulfilled later. **But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make [it] glorious by way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.** The preposition used with Sidon (which is on the shore in Northern Israel) is 'al (אל) [pronounced *a/*] and it has a variety of meanings and applications. It can mean *over*, *against* and it can mean a direction *towards*. It is also possible that their fusion with Asher and Issachar could have opened up their boundaries to the sea. Moses groups the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar together and speaks of them taking from the abundance of the seas (Deut. 33:18–19).

The other possibility is that what Jacob said was not inspired. This is discussed in greater detail in Joshua 19:10, listing the two problems with interpreting this either way. Personally, I cannot make sense of some words of Jacob being remarkably prophetic and others not. So, either we have a problem with the text or an improper understanding of the future of Zebulun.

In any case, the valley of Jezreel, which is in the area occupied by Zebulun, was the ideal highway to transport goods from the Mediterranean coast inland. If the border was not on the coast, the northern border was pointed in the direction of the ancient commercial centers of Phoenicia, of which Sidon was chief.

**"Issachar [is] a strong donkey crouching between the saddlebags;  
 "He saw a resting place that was good and the land was pleasant,  
 "So he bowed his shoulder to bear and became a slave at forced labor." [Gen. 49:14–15]**

The area that the tribe of Issachar dwelt in was the very fertile plain of Esdraelon, but they never quite took this completely from the Canaanites. It was located between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee, next to Zebulun, close enough to trade in that which is related to the seas (See Deut. 33:19, quoted below).

In this verse, the implication is that Issachar is strong, but not exceptionally brilliant. Issachar will find a place where life is pleasant, a place of general rest, and Issachar will first become complacent, and then become enslaved. In 732 B.C., Tiglath-pileser III overran Assyria and Samaria and turned its inhabitants into slaves (2Kings 15:29 Isa. 9:1). This is the long view on Issachar.

On the other hand, in Deut. 33, Moses looked into the near future. He groups Zebulun and Issachar together and wrote **They shall call peoples to the mountain; there they shall offer righteous sacrifices, for they will take out of the abundance of the seas** (Deut. 33:19). During the time of the judges, Deborah and Barak both came from the tribe

<sup>160</sup> This preposition is according to the Samaritan, Septuagint, Syrian, the Targum of Jonathan and several codices

<sup>161</sup> Antiq. Vol. 1:22

of Issachar (Judges 4:12). Judges 4:12 pictures the charge of Deborah and Barak down Mount Tabor, putting the enemies of Israel, the armies of Jabin and Sisera, to flight.

**"Dan will judge [or, vindicate] his people as one of the tribes of Israel.  
 "Dan will be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path  
 "That bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backwards  
 "For Your salvation [or, deliverance] I await, O Yahweh!" [Gen. 49:16–18]**

The name *Dan* means *to judge*. I have heard that the Antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan (or will this be the false prophet?), but I cannot find documentation for that at this time. This is in part because the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in the twelve tribes of Israel in Revelation 7. It is possibly even this verse which implies that.

Dan as a serpent and a viper waiting to bite at the horse's heels tells us that he does not directly attack God but attacks Israel. It is Israel which awaits the deliverance of Yahweh, not the tribe of Dan (in fact, this sentence may be separate from the direct statements about Dan).

This verse sets up a history of the tribe of Dan. He first vindicates his people by their conquering northern territory previously unoccupied by any tribe of Israel (Judges 18). However, it is likely that the tribe of Dan became less and less populous as time went on, its influence dwindling, its idolatry increasing (2Kings 10:29). Although Dan does not appear as one of the tribes in Rev. 7, Dan does have future in the millennium, according to Ezekiel's vision in Ezek. 48:1.

Like many prophecies in the Bible, there are two takes on the same prophecy—the near and the far view. This can also be seen as a specific prophecy of Sampson, the most famous Danite and perhaps the most famous of the judges. One take of Dan as a serpent is its small size and insignificance compared to the harm it can cause. Sampson, but one man, killed 1000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:14–17). Later, when he had been enslaved and his eyes gouged out, he was also deemed insignificant, a person to amuse royalty (Judges 16:27)—yet he pulled two pillars together and caused the palace (or mansion) to fall upon 3000 of the occupants who had enslaved him and were amused by him (Judges 16:27–30).

As the serpent did not directly attack the rider of the horse, Sampson did not directly attack the people of the mansion. Both Sampson and the serpent appeared insignificant compared to the damage that they caused.

**"Gad: A raiding band shall raid but he will raid at their heel." [Gen. 49:19]**

There is a play on words here with Gad (see p. 308 in Bullinger). Obviously, Gad has the least amount of time devoted to him. Outside of this verse and the references to Jacob's sons as a whole, we know nothing about the personal life of Gad, save his family line.

As Jacob has done throughout this poem, he has made plays on words—Gad and raiders are very similar in the Hebrew. It means that Gad would be subjected to raids from other countries but that he would return the fight.

The Gadites possessed the land east of the Jordan between the two seas (Num. 32:1–5 Joshua 13:24–28) and were quite prominent as supporters of David during his day (1Chron. 12:8 26:29–32). They later lost this inheritance, being deported by Tiglath-pilneser III (1Chron. 5:26) and Ammonites moved into this land (Jer. 49:1). This land will be restored to them, according to Ezek. 48:27.

A minor linguistic note: languages used certain words in the plural and in the singular differently than other languages do. It would be our natural inclination to write *but he will raid at their heels*. On the other hand, it would not seem unusual for someone to talk about the thinking of the conservative element today. There are millions of conservatives and they all believe very different things. Furthermore, they have thoughts about more than one thing. However, we are not concerned with that when we speak of the *thinking* of the conservative party. We are taking the many different issues, the main threads of thought, and gathering these into a complete whole and speaking of that in the singular. That is what is done here and quite a number of other passages. It isn't that we

are missing something in the translation when he sees a singular and expects a plural; it is simply a different way of viewing the situation.

However, what appears to be the case is, the preposition associated with v. 20, should actually have been placed at the end of v. 19, making *heel* into *heels*.

**"Asher's food shall be rich [lit., fat] and he will give delicacies [to the] king."** [Gen. 49:20]

Several translations, including the KJV, NASB, *The Emphasized Bible* and Owen tell us that Asher *shall yield royal dainties*. *Shall yield* is the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of the very common verb *nāthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAN*] and it means *to place, to set, to put, to give, to appoint* and even *to make*.

*Royal* is *melek*<sup>e</sup> (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced *MEH-lek*] and it simply means *king*. *Dainties* (which had me thinking a number of things having nothing to do with this passage) is the noun *ma'ādān* (מַאֲדָן) [pronounced *mah-ad-AWN*] which means *delight, delicacy* and is only found here and in 1Sam. 15:32<sup>162</sup> Prov. 29:17 and Lam. 4:5. We have almost the exact same phrase in Prov. 29:17, except that *ma'adan* is in the construct in Genesis. The construct means that the noun is closely related to another noun in the sentence (in this case *king*) and often the other noun is translated in the possessive in the English to convey this. That passage reads *discipline your son and he will give delight(s) to your heart*. Obviously, the kid is not giving *dainties* to his father's heart. Lam. 4:5 reads *those who feasted in delights (or, on delicacies) perish in the streets*. This does not help us a great deal in this translation or its meaning.

What makes it harder to interpret is that Asher is one of the least distinguished tribes of Israel. However, Moses says of Asher: **"Blessed above sons be Asher; let him be the favorite of his brothers and let him dip his foot in oil."** (Deut. 33:24). The area occupied by Asher was known for its olive trees and even today for its olive industry; so Asher did produce a great deal of olive oil and they were prosperous for that reason. Perhaps the reference to rich food could be the supplement of olive oil to their food. Deut. 33 and this passage taken together certainly imply that Asher enjoyed a great deal of prosperity, but beyond these prophecies, we have very little information about Asher. In any case, their relationship to any king is uncertain (to me).

**"Naphtali [is] a hind (deer), sent out, the one giving speeches [of] beauty."** [Gen. 49:21]

Here is where we find no dearth of translations. Owen: *Naphtali is a hind let loose that bears comely fawns (or, beautiful words)*. NASB: *Naphtali is a doe let loose; he gives beautiful words*. *The Emphasized Bible*: *Naphtali is a slender hind that putteth forth antlers of beauty*. *The New English Bible*: *Naphtali is a spreading terebinth putting forth lovely boughs*. *The Modern Reader's Bible*: *Naphtali is a hind let loose: He giveth goodly words*. The English translation of the Septuagint: *Nephtalim is a spreading stem, bestowing beauty on its fruit*. Obviously the only thing that the translators seem to agree upon is *Naphtali*.

At the outset, I am not very certain as to what any of this means in any of the translations, but let's just try to get through the translation itself first. *Naphtali* means *to twist, to wrestle*. Normally, Jacob has made a play on words with the meaning of the sons' names; however, here, he does not seem to. There is no verb for *is*, just *Naphtali* and then the feminine singular of *'ayālāh* (אֵילָה) [pronounced *ah-yaw-LAW*] and it does mean *hind or doe*. It can be related to being surefooted and secure. Of the eight times that it occurs in Scripture, three refer to the *feet* of the doe, referring to its speed and surefootedness. Twice in Song of Solomon it refers to an animal of grace and beauty (yet surefootedness, in the sense of self-confidence, could be implied). *Terebinth* is spelled almost the same way in the Hebrew as *doe* except that it lacks the yod (י) and the vowel points are not exactly the same (I mention this so you can see where some of the other translations came from). A translator's dream is to accurately translate the Hebrew into English which is readable and makes sense. This is the intention of these various translators (as well as myself).

<sup>162</sup> This is disputed, however, and the difference in meaning in this passage is great. One view is that Agag comes to Samuel *cheerfully* and the other is that he comes to Samuel *in bonds*; the former view being our word and the latter view believing it to be another word entirely

The third of the six short words in this verse is the feminine singular, Qal passive participle of *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHK*] and its basic meaning is *to send out, to send for, to send away*. It has a variety of translations. The participle means this acts as a verbal adjective or as an adjectival noun; the passive means that the subject receives the action of the verb, allowing us to translate this *sent (out)* or *sent (away)*, which is the way this verb form is translated everywhere else that it occurs.

This is followed by a definite article and the Qal active participle of *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAN*], a verb which we have covered with much greater application than the previous verb. It can mean *to place, to put, to set*. This form of the verb is most often translated *giving, sending, delivering*. When a participle acts as a verb, it does **not** take the definite article. We could translate this as *the sending* or *the one sending* or *the giver of*.

The next word in this verse is the masculine plural noun construct of (and this is disputed) *'êmer* (אָמַר) [pronounced *AY-mer*] and it means *words, speech, utterances*. This is followed by the masculine singular noun (in the pausal form) of *shepher* (שֹׁפֵר) [pronounced *SHEH-fer*] and it means *good, beautiful*.

Now the even more difficult task of making sense out of these words: Naphtali was sent out or away, inasmuch as Naphtali occupied the northernmost portion of Israel. My guess is that Naphtali was a man who always had something to say, something which sounded good. He was very self-confident (surefooted). Perhaps it was he who put together most of the story about Joseph's death. However, since he only sounded good, God the Holy Spirit did not see fit to record any of these wonderful speeches of which Naphtali was so proud.

As a tribe, they are never mentioned separately in the Torah. Even throughout the rest of the Bible, Naphtali is rarely mentioned alone, other than in some battles mentioned in conjunction with Barak and Deborah, and with Gideon. It is certain that they, like the tribe of Naphtali, enjoyed a great deal of material prosperity as Deut. 33:24–25 points out: *Of of Asher he said, "More blessed than son is Asher; may he be favored by his brothers and may he dip his foot in oil. Your lock shall be iron and bronze, and, according to your days, so shall your leisurely walk be."*

The last word in this verse was in the pausal form, meaning that Jacob took a breath before continuing with his poem. Jacob is about to speak concerning his two sons by Rachel.

**"A son bearing [fruit] [is] Joseph; a son bearing [fruit] by a spring;  
His branches extend over the wall.**

**"The archers fiercely attacked him, shot at him, and harrassed him sorely."** [Gen. 49:22–23]

There are also problems with this passage; however, not as many as with the previous. The first word in this verse, the one often translated *bough* is the masculine singular noun *bên* (בֵּן) [pronounced *bane*] and it is the word we all know as *son*. The KJV of the Bible has a very pervasive influence over the centuries so its translation is still held to in many Bibles, although there does not appear to be a disputed reading here.

Ben is followed by the Qal active participle, feminine singular of *pârâh* (פָּרָה) [pronounced *paw-RAW*] and it means *to bear fruit, to be fruitful*. Rather than reading *a fruitful bough* this should read: *A son, bearing [fruit], Joseph! A son, bearing [fruit] by a spring*.

Just as there are no *boughs* in this verse, there are no branches. The Hebrew word is the feminine plural of the noun *bath* (בָּת) [pronounced *bath*] and it means *daughters* in the wider relationships inferred when the word *son* is used. Then we have a strange thing—the verb is the Qal perfect, feminine singular of *tsâ'ad* (צָעַד) [pronounced *tsaw-AD*] and it means *to march, to step*. Here the word is dubious (BDB p. 857) and the preferred translation is *have climbed over*. The object of the preposition is *wall*.

Jacob reveals his love of Joseph, speaking of his beauty, fragrance and production. His influence extended far beyond his land and family. The archers, obviously, are his brothers. All this is present time and Jacob is telling his sons that he knows what has been occurring. Jacob had been a very wealthy man and human viewpoint would think that if you cut Joseph off from this wealth and have his loved ones place him into slavery, his environment

will shape him into a self-pitying, useless poor slave with no self-esteem. However, on the contrary, operating under divine viewpoint in God's will, Joseph prospered beyond anyone's wildest dreams. This is why it does not matter what your environment dictates—we belong to God who overrules all circumstances, all heartaches, all troubles and difficulties. Note what Joseph never did: he never wallowed in self-pity and he never held onto bitterness toward his brothers. He picked up where he was, where God put him, and moved on, without rancor, without hatred and without destructive self-pity.

The far view of this prophecy is that the archers are the Canaanites of the coast and those who centered in Bethshean (Joshua 17:15–18); of the men in Bethel that the Ephraimites fought against in Judges 1:22–25, and of the invading Egyptian troops who controlled many of the more important trade routes and strategic areas circa 1400–1200 B.C.. We have historical documents of the Canaanite kings asking Egypt to provide them with archers.

As a side-note, it has been asserted by some that Genesis was written after the reign of Solomon. This is one passage which would be incongruous with such a viewpoint, seeing that at that time, the Ephraimites and the Judæan had become enemies and it would be highly unlikely for a Judæan to speak of Joseph (and therefore, his two half-tribes) in such glowing terms.

**"Yet his bow remained unmoved;  
 "His arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob;  
 "From there is the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel;  
 "By the God of your father, Who will help you,  
 "The Almighty God, Who will bless you will blessings [of] heaven above;  
 "[With] blessings of the deep that crouches beneath;  
 "Blessings of the breasts and of the womb." [Gen. 49:24–25]**

Jacob attests to Joseph's strength and his stability. The Mighty One of Jacob is certainly God the Father. From Him (*from thence*) is the Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who is the Rock of Ages, the Rock of Israel, later to be known as the huge stone (from which Peter was a chip) and then known as the chief cornerstone that the builder's rejected. Joseph has been blessed by the supergrace blessings from God, above and beyond anything that he could deserve; blessings from the earth (temporal prosperity); and blessings from the breasts and the womb, which represent life and sustenance. God the Father is the Father of Jesus, who helps Him; and Mary will be the mother of Jesus, who gives birth to Him and provides Him with earthly sustenance.

Jacob is at once blessing Joseph, and speaking of the blessings to Jesus as well, as Joseph is a type of Christ.

**"The blessings of your father have prevailed over the blessings of my progenitors  
 "Over the charm of the hills of antiquity;  
 "May they [these blessings] be on the head of Joseph;  
 "And on the crown of him who was the consecrated one from among his brothers." [Gen. 49:26]**

The first verb is the Qal perfect of *gâbar* (גָּבַר) [pronounced *gaw-BAR*] and it means *to be strong or mighty*, but in the perfect voice it means *to prevail*. This is followed by the preposition *‘al* (לְעַל) [pronounced *al*] which means *over, above, upon*. Then we have a word sometimes translated *mountains*: *hârâh* (הָרָה) [pronounced *haw-RAW*] and it means *to conceive, to become pregnant*. It is found here in the Qal active participle masculine plural, first person singular suffix. The participle means this is a verb acting as a noun; rather than calling these which are in the masculine plural *the ones bearing* it might be more apropos to call them *the ones fathering or siring*. The easiest English translation which approximates the Qal active participle is *progenitors*. The first singular suffix is translated *my*.

The next phrase begins with *‘al* again (above, beyond, upon) and a word with two very different meanings. This should not cause us any grief to encounter this now and again. There are hundreds of English words which are spelled and even pronounced the same, but means very different things and their meaning must be inferred by context. One simple example is the word *charge*. This can mean vastly different things, depending upon whether the subject is a woman in a department store, a civil war general leading his troops, a near dead car battery or

an old English father giving responsibility to a son. The word here is ta'āvâh (תַּאֲוָה) [pronounced *tah-av-AW*] and it can mean *limit, utmost bound* or *desire, wish, longing* and it can refer to that which is *desired, longed for* and in this way imply *beauty, charm*.

This verse ends with the noun nâzîyr (נָזִיר) [pronounced *naw-ZEER*] and it means *separated from, consecrated to*. It can refer to a prince, a Nazarite. It is often used of someone who has been separated out from the human race and consecrated to God. As a prince, Joseph was separated from his brothers and from the human race in general, and he was consecrated to Pharaoh and to Egypt. God had directed this amazing chain of events, so he was consecrated or dedicated to God.

The word is a double-edged sword; it automatically carries the thought of being separated from one thing and dedicated to another. Joseph was separated from his brothers in order to be dedicated to God and to Egypt. Like any translation, this is difficult to do with just one word. I went with the footnoted translation of *The Emphasized Bible; the consecrated one from among his brothers*.

Obviously, in this verse, Jacob, in having his son Joseph back, has been blessed beyond the blessings of his predecessors. He is living in Egypt as a guest of royalty with all of his sons and his sons' wives and their children; having just come out of poverty which threatened his very existence. He asks that these great blessings promised to him and to those who came before him to be given to Joseph, the man separated from his brothers to achieve this high position in Egypt.

**"Benjamin, a ravenous wolf in the morning, devouring the prey  
"And even dividing the spoil." [Gen. 49:27]**

This is interesting; we know that Jacob has always played favorites when it comes to his own children and, when Joseph was thought dead, he placed Benjamin above all the rest. Now, here it is a few years later; Benjamin is still the youngest and still Jacob's favorite or second favorite and Jacob only says a few words about him and what he has to say is not clearly favorable—it appears to be a somewhat negative message. This is because Jacob is speaking by God the Holy Spirit and there is nothing in the tribe of Benjamin which is all that favorable.

Benjamin has its high and low points. When men attacked a Levite's concubine, the tribe of Benjamin gave them safe harbor, almost igniting a civil war (Judges 20:3–48). From the tribe of Benjamin comes Saul, Israel's first king, who began as a wonderful king and then degenerated due to lack of character and inordinate competition. However, the Benjamites never really warmed up to David, feeling some of the same inordinate competition which King Saul had (2Sam. 2:15 3:17 16:5, 11 20:1). The boundaries for Benjamin are not entirely clear, placing them somewhere between Judah and Joseph; therefore, when the revolt against Rehoboam occurred, it is unclear whether they supported him (1Kings 12:21–23 2Chron. 11:10, 12, 23 14:8 15:2) or opposed him (1Kings 12:20). Quite likely, they were divided on this, entering in onto both sides of the civil war. Since Jerusalem was a part of Benjamite territory, it is certain that a portion of Benjamin remained with Judah.

The tribe of Benjamin was known for its great abilities in war. Most of their men of war were ambidextrous (Judges 20:16 1Chron. 8:40 12:2). They are remembered for several of the battles that they fought in (Judges 5:14 20:20). We will cover the **Doctrine of the Tribe of Benjamin** in Judges 20:48.

Finally, the greatest man of the church age, the Apostle Paul, was from the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1 Phil. 3:5). We will go into greater detail on this tribe in Judges 20:48.

**All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them as he blessed them, each with the blessing appropriate for him. [Gen. 49:28]**

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart Index](#)

**Jacob's Burial Instructions**

**Then he ordered them and said to them "I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron, the Hittite; in the cave that is in the field at Mechpelah to the east of Mara in the land of Canaan which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. [It was] there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is in it were purchased from the sons of Heth. [Gen. 49:28–32]**

We have never been told what happened to all of Jacob's wives. Rachel died in childbirth and here we find out that Leah died back in the land and was buried in Abraham's burial plot. We do not know about their personal maids.

Jacob is going into great detail about this cave for a couple of reasons. He is making it clear that this is where he wants to be buried so there can be no mistaking his deathbed wishes. It is obvious that his sons do not fully grasp the history of their people, so Jacob is filling in information for them. As you will recall, we studied this in Gen. 23:16–20.

**When Jacob finished instructing his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people. [Gen. 49:33]**

This in the end of chapter 49, although chapter 50 picks up right here.

---

## Internal Links

[Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries](#)

[External Links](#)

[Genesis Chapter Links](#)

---

**Genesis 50** has been completely reworked and expanded, including the entire word-by-word Hebrew exegesis. It is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). It is highly recommended that you go to that study instead of this one. All of the material found here is included in that study. These chapters are being completed one-by-one and will eventually supplant this very incomplete study of Genesis.

## Genesis 50

### Genesis 50:1–26

Our outline would be as follows:

Vv. 1–5	<a href="#">The death of Jacob</a>
Vv. 6–14	<a href="#">The burial of Jacob</a>
Vv. 15–21	<a href="#">The graciousness of Joseph toward his brothers</a>
Vv. 22–26	<a href="#">The death of Joseph</a>

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

v. 3	<a href="#">James Freeman on the Egyptian Embalming Process</a>
v. 19	<a href="#">“Am I in the Place of God?” Explained</a>
Addendum	<a href="#">Parallels Between Joseph and the Lord Jesus Christ</a>

**Introduction:** Gen. 50 (which begins with Jacob being dead) is a continuation of Gen. 49, where Jacob is on his deathbed and giving his end-of-life blessing. There should not have been a chapter break. Jacob has just finished with speaking to his sons and he is about to die (Gen. 49).

Once he dies (Gen. 49:33), his sons become quite concerned as to their future with Joseph. If he was like them, they would have been kept alive and pampered until the death of their father, and then their deaths would follow shortly afterward. However, Joseph is not a petty vindictive man. He was rightly related to history; he was occupied with the person of Jesus Christ; and even though he recognized the actions of his brothers as being evil, he knew this all fell under the heading of God's plan for his life. Without the actions of his brothers, he would have never come to Egypt, never become the crown prince over Egypt and would have not been able to deliver his family during this period of economic collapse. So Joseph has nothing planned by way of revenge. That is what a smaller man would have done.

The last decades of Joseph's life are not covered at all. Only his death. This final passage obviously was not written by Joseph, but by, perhaps, one of his sons or one of his brothers. Moses would have been able to write about it *only if* there was some previous record.

### The Death of Jacob

[Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him and kissed him.](#) [Gen. 50:1]

Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams; and in this chapter, he will die at the age of 110 years. So, he will be the second highest ruler in the land of Egypt for a period of 80 years.

Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt after the second years of famine had begun (forcing them to return to Egypt). Joseph would have been about 40 years old then.



Jacob obviously improved and grew spiritually during this time. It is obvious from Gen. 49, that Jacob could speak to his entire family and provide them a message of spiritual importance.

It is clear that, in Gen. 49, Jacob experienced some significant spiritual advance; and what he said in the previous chapter was quite significant.

**Then Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father, so the physicians embalmed Israel.** [Gen. 50:2]

This is the only place in the Bible where embalming is mentioned. We find the same word used in SOS 2:13; however, I do not know if there is a textual corruption because the meaning is obviously quite different. What is done with the body after death is a matter of local custom. There is not a right or a wrong way of burial. Jacob requesting to be buried in the promised land reveals his faith in the resurrection and his eternal inheritance of the land. In his life's end, he recognizes that it is God's will for him to be in Egypt, but when he is resurrected, he would like his body to be in Israel.

**Forty days were required for it (or, him); for so many days are required for embalming; and the Egyptians wept seventy days for him.** [Gen. 50:3]

Herodotus, the father of history, tells us that the embalming process in Egypt took 70 days. Barthel informs us that Herodotus was fascinated by mummies and the Egyptian process of embalming and mummification. However, he wrote approximately 1000 years later, so obviously some techniques had changed over the centuries. However, his 70 day time period allows the 40 days given for embalming here to seem reasonable. We will explain the 70 day mourning period a few verses down.

The actual embalming process went as follows:

### **James Freeman on the Egyptian Embalming Process**

1. The brain was removed by means of a crooked wire inserted through the nose into the brain cavity.
2. An incision was made in the left side of the abdomen by a stone, not a metal, knife. From this incision was removed the internal organs, with the exception of the heart and kidneys. It is possible that these organs were preserved and then replaced back in the body; they were removed, preserved and kept in vases; or they were removed and cast into the Nile. The differences here could be a result of misinterpreting the archeological data; different customs over different periods of time; or different customs depending upon what was the desire of the family.
3. The outside of the body was cleansed and the inside was cleaned with palm-wine, oil of cedar and other antiseptic preparations.
4. The cavities of the head and body were then filled with myrrh, cassia, cinnamon and whatever else might have aromatic and preservative functions.
5. The abdomen was then sewed up.
6. The body was then seeped in a niter solution for a period of 30, 40 or 70 days (we do not have agreement here for the same reasons as found in step #2).
7. The body and limbs were then wrapped in fine linen bandages, 7–8 inches wide and up to 600-700 feet in length.
8. Here is when things get a little hazy. Because of the appearance of the charred bandages and bones, it is guessed that the bodies were subjected to very high temperatures during this process. This perhaps takes place prior to the bandaging and might involve being placed into an oven or soaked in boiling hot pitch. My only guess here is to make the body more malleable for the wrapping of the bandages.
9. Then the bandaged body was then covered with layers of dampened, lime-plastered cloth. This was removed, allowed to harden, and then placed back onto the body and sewn up in back. Various things were painted on this outer caccoon, if you will, with the face painted as true to life as possible.
10. Sometimes the body was then placed inside another case made of sycamore or cedar and that was even placed inside another similar case or a sarcophagus made of stone.

*Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. .

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Various theories have been posed as to why this elaborate process was undertaken. It is thought that perhaps they desired to preserve the body as long as possible; that it was expected that the soul would return some day to inhabit the body; and perhaps they just had way too much time on their hands. The oldest surviving mummy is found in the British Museum, dating back to the fourth dynasty of Egypt, the mid-third millennium B.C. (to put this into perspective, Joseph lived 500-700 years after that).

**And when the days of weeping were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swearing, saying, *I am about to die; in my tomb which I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan—there you will bury me. Now, therefore, let me go up, I pray you, and bury my father—then I will return.*'" [Gen. 50:4–5]**

Joseph, even though a man who was a hard-liner against welfare and required the people to exchange something for the grain that they had given in taxes to the Egyptian government, was well-liked and respected by the Egyptian people and they empathized with him in his loss.

One possible explanation for this: Pharaoh and Joseph occupied different realms of Egypt, although Pharaoh kept several personal servants loyal to him with Joseph. When Joseph needed to speak to Pharaoh, he merely spoke to Pharaoh's representative in his palace and that representative would then travel and speak to Pharaoh. Joseph is asking for a temporary leave of absence to go and bury his father.

Another possible explanation: You may wonder why Joseph just did not, for something as important as this, go directly to Pharaoh himself. What seems most likely is, during the time of mourning (which close to a week would have passed before Joseph would have felt up to a trip), Joseph would allow his beard and hair to grow. The Egyptians did not like hair and it would have been a breach of etiquette to appear before the court of Pharaoh looking as he looked.

### The Burial of Jacob

**And Pharaoh answered, "Go up, and bury your father, as he made you swear." [Gen. 50:6]**

The events of vv. 2 & 3 are very possibly coterminous with vv. 4–6. Soon after Jacob's death, when Joseph was ready to continue with his duties as a son, after after the embalming process had begun, he contacted Pharaoh. That process itself took several days to several weeks. Joseph remained in Egypt for at least seventy days following Jacob's death. Here he has Pharaoh's permission to return to the land of Canaan to bury his father. He asked Pharaoh's permission for two reasons—one out of respect and deference to Pharaoh's position, and two, this would effectively shut down government in that area for several months. It will not just be Joseph carrying his father on the back of a donkey.

**So Joseph went up to bury his father and all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household and all the elders of the land of Egypt went up with him, as well as all the household of Joseph and his brothers and his father's household. Only their children, their flocks and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. [Gen. 50:7–8]**

There was a huge caravan that accompanied Joseph to the burial of his father. His father's death was mourned by heads of state as well as his own household dignitaries and servants. This was a testimony to the promises of God which were made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The land of Canaan was given specifically to them as an eternal inheritance; and, that being so, meant that Jacob should be buried nowhere else but in Canaan.

**And with him there went up both chariots and hosremen; and it became a very large group of people [lit., a great company]. [Gen. 50:9]**

Jacob had been in Egypt long enough to recover spiritually and to endear himself to the people of Egypt. Furthermore, Joseph, being respected and well-liked, was accompanied by this huge procession out of sympathy. We also have records of funeral processions of this approximate size for the funerals of important members of Egyptian society and royalty. This kind of procession occurred throughout all of Egypt during every period of ancient Egyptian history.

**When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a great lamentation and were very sorrowful. And he made a seven day mourning for his father. [Gen. 50:10]**

The embalming took 40 days, the preparation for the trip took perhaps another week; the traveling took close to two weeks, and they mourned for another seven days, making approximately seventy days of mourning. The loss of a father, a patriarch, was a very serious loss, particularly in the eastern world.

This threshing floor was not part of a building, but it was an open area outside, maybe 50-100 feet in diameter where grain was threshed and winnowed. This threshing floor would have been elevated, smooth, hard and clean. That is, if this is a threshing floor that we are speaking of (this could be a settlement named after a famous threshing floor that was there or had been there).

**When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "A grievous mourning this is to the Egyptians." Therefore the place was named Abel-mizraim. It [is] beyond the Jordan. [Gen. 50:11]**

The Canaanites, a degenerate peoples to whom there was a lot of death, the loss of a man was not as important as what they see here. The sight of a caravan so large, one which was in mourning from Egypt, had an impact where it traveled and particularly where they stopped. Abel-mizraim means *a meadow of Egypt*. Now might be a good time to observe the radical difference between two words from different languages for the same thing: our English word *Egypt* and the Hebrew-Canaan word *Mizraim*.

**Thus his sons did for him what he had commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field at Machpelah which Abrahm bought with the field to possess as a burying place from Ephron the Hittite to the east of Mamre. [Gen. 50:12–13]**

We have found in Palestines several tombs from the 1500-1200 B.C. era, which were family tombs, wherein they were utilized generation after generation. As the grave (or cave, actually) became full, the bones of previous generations were pushed to the back of the cave or placed in ossuary jars along with whatever possessions had been buried with them, and placed near the rear of the cave.

Notice that there is more time given to this event of the burial of Jacob than there is to the rest of the life of Joseph as the ruler of Egypt. Whereas we do not know the exact time frame, it is likey that Joseph died within thirty years of the death of his father. Joseph, when he writes this, likely on his return or immediately after his return from Canaan, he is like any person who has had a personal tragedy—someowhat stunned, who wants to say more than he actually does.

**Joseph returned to Egypt—he and his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father—after he buried his father. [Gen. 50:14]**

## The Graciousness of Joseph Toward His Brothers

**When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil which we did to him." [Gen. 50:15]**

During this seventy days plus the return trip of a few weeks, Joseph's brothers had a long time to think over what had occurred. When someone is a failure in the spiritual life, they tend to replay moments of their lives from the past over and over again, as if somehow they could change the past. The past is unchangeable and, although we should learn from our previous errors, we should not dwell obsessively in the past, reliving our failures and our mistakes.

One of the things that we learn from psychology, first revealed to us here in the Bible, is that people impute their own shortcomings to others. In psychology this is called projection. Given three months to ponder the death of their father, their own mortality and what they had done with their lives, the ten brothers realize that if Joseph is anything like they are (and they assume that he is), then he will have them executed now that their father is dead. We learn a lot about people by listening to what they suspect us of doing or what they think that we are capable of doing. Most of the time they are telling us that they are that way and, if the circumstances were reverse, the things which they accuse us of are things that they would do themselves.

**So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave us this command before he died, saying, 'Say to Joseph, forgive, I ask you, the transgression of your brothers and their sins because they did evil to you.' And now we pray you, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'" Joseph wept when they spoke to him. [Gen. 50:16–17]**

Joseph lived in a palace and his brothers lived in the land of Goshen. They were too afraid of Joseph to come to him personally, so they sent a messenger instead. They have lived under Joseph's rule for several years now and he has provided for them and their loved ones. He is hurt that they would think these things about him. He knows that their father said no such thing because he would have said something like that directly to Joseph and not to them. Or else he would have said that to all of them as he prophesied as to their futures. Joseph recognizes that this is a lie—a poorly crafted one at that—and that after all of these years, he has not earned their trust and love. What he may or may not realize is that they say these things because this is what they are capable. They are judging Joseph based upon what they would do in a similar situation. Under the exact same circumstances, they would killed Joseph when their father died, had he done the same thing to them as they originally did to him.

**Then came his brothers also and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." [Gen. 50:18]**

After some frank discussion, they recognize that they live in Joseph's land, they have just escaped death by starvation, and if they all picked up and moved back to Canaan, Joseph, if he was of a mind to, could find and slaughter them with ease. They realize that Joseph could kill them at any time and they realize that their story is as lame as they come and their lying to someone who might want to kill them would only make the situation worse. So they put themselves at Joseph's mercy. Certainly you have heard the expression, *let's get it over with*.

**But Joseph said to them, Fear not—for am I in the place of God?" [Gen. 50:19]**

This question is technically called an affirmation negation. It is a question stated in the affirmative, yet it demands a very storn negative response. We encountered a similar grammatical structure in Gen. 18:14, 17 and will see this figure of speech used several times in the future, e.g., Deut. 7:17 Psalm 35:10, etc.

With this brief statement, Joseph has said a mouthful:

## “Am I in the Place of God?” Explained

1. Joseph is not in a position to judge them as God judges; it is up to God to evaluate what they did to him
2. Joseph is not in a position to have them killed—his is the prerogative of God
3. God has promised the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and has promised that their seed would be as the sand of the sea; Joseph cannot retract that promise nor can he try to stand in the way of God's intent by giving such a promise by having his brothers killed
4. Joseph has, in effect, deferred all judgement and justice to the throne of God

The lesson is obvious to us—judgment remains the prerogative of God and we do not judge others as to their motives, actions or thoughts. Nor is it ever our right to take the law into our own hands and become involved in vigilantism on any level (including the bombing of abortion clinics and the harassment of those who are employed there).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

When it comes to making judgments, we should be able to understand, we are not precluded from all judgment. For the 1% who cannot distinguish, this is certainly not the case with criminal activity nor is this the case if we are jurors or a judge at a trial. Furthermore, if our responsibility in a business or a firm requires evaluating a person's job performance, then this does not apply. In that case, it is our duty as a Christian to provide the most objective evaluation or judgement that we are capable of, disregarding our personal feelings toward the person who is being evaluated.

**"As for you, you meant [lit., thought] evil against me but God meant [lit., thought] it for good to bring about as they are today that many people should be kept alive." [Gen. 50:20]**

*Meant or thought* is the word *châshab* (חָשַׁב) and it means *to think, to account, to charge, to impute, to plot, to contrive*. Its basic root means *to weave or to fabricate*. It is a thinking process with considers actions and events which would logically follow. Most often it is used in a malicious sense, but not always. Here, obviously their thinking was meant in a malicious sense, but God's was not. In both cases, the verbs are in the Qal perfect, meaning that both his brothers and God reached a decision as to what they were going to do and what the likely consequences were to be.

*Evil* here is in the feminine gender—such a use appears to emphasize the results and outcomes of wrongdoing as opposed to moral and spiritual evil which is brought out in the masculine use of the word. Similarly, *good* here is in the feminine gender where again, outcomes, consequences and results are emphasized over moral good.

Joseph knew what God's plan was—he knew what had been promised to Jacob and to Isaac and to Abraham. He knew that he was instrumental in keeping this promise. Joseph had a distinct place in God's plan, a spot designed for him in eternity past, with responsibilities and duties toward his family and toward the nation of Egypt. Joseph, without any direct divine guidance insofar as we know, knew his place in God's plan. He certainly knew God's Word, which he had learned from Jacob who likely had preserved it and told these things to Joseph when Joseph was young.

If we are maturing spiritually, then guidance in God's plan is easy. When we are mature, we have, as Thieme puts it, a personal sense of destiny. We are not just a ball in a pinball machine bounced about by every wave of adversity in some random fashion. We are not just a leaf blown by the wind, without destination or purpose. Life is not a series of random events to which we are subjected but every circumstance has a purpose and, with some spiritual maturity, we can recognize the reason for everything which occurs in our own lives.

This is exactly what Joseph is doing here. He knows the motivation of his brothers yet he recognizes that God can take that in His plan and make good come of it. He is the crown prince of Egypt, the second most powerful man in Egypt, because no matter what intentions his brothers had, the overall effect place him in that position. God allowed his brothers to do to him what they wished because He could take this and cause everything to come

out for good, as in Rom. 8:28. **We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to a pre-determined plan.** This does not mean that everything is good nor does it mean that everything which happens to everyone is mixed with the other circumstances and comes out good. This is for people who are called of God to a pre-determined plan—that means that this verse is firstly restricted to Christians only. Any unbeliever who faces heartache and pressure cannot apply this one promise out of the Bible. Furthermore, this does not apply to just any Christian—this verse applies to the Christian who loves God, which is a very small minority of Christians. The Christian who love God is not the Christian who is always saying *praise the Lord, God is good*, etc. A Christian who loves God is someone who (1) knows Who God is through the intake of Bible doctrine and (2) desires to know more about God through the intake of Bible doctrine. A person who is not growing in grace and **in the knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ does not qualify to apply this verse to their lives. Joseph qualified on both counts. His brothers did not have a clue as to his character nor did they have any idea as to their place in God's plan. They were confused.

**"Therefore do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and assured them [lit., spoke to their hearts].** [Gen. 50:21]

What Joseph did is covered by two words: the Piel imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *nâcham* (נָחַם) [pronounced *naw-KHAM*], which properly means *to sign, to breathe*. However, by implication, it means *to comfort, to show compassion*. The second word is the Piel imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *dâbar* (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw<sup>b</sup>-VAR*] and it simply means *to speak*. It is followed by the preposition *לְ* and the word *lêb* (לֵב) [pronounced *labe* or *lave*] and most of us recognize that as *heart*. Both are intensive, since they are in the Piel stem. So Joseph both comforted them and spoke words to their heart. Assurance means that Joseph told them that he was going to provide for them and not kill them and he gave his motivation. Comfort means that emotionally he calmed their fears.

If you did not understand why Joseph put his silver cup in with Benjamin's possessions several chapters ago, then you would expect Joseph not to be so forthright, but to make his brothers sweat a little; to leave things inconclusive. However, Joseph did not and does not play any games with them. He could have left things open-ended; he could have indicated that he was thinking about it; he could have done a lot of things to make them feel ill-at-ease, without having them executed. However, as we have seen with what previously occurred, Joseph does not just play mind games with his brothers. What occurred in previous chapters all had a purpose—a definite purpose. Now there would be no purpose in misleading his brothers in any way as to his true intentions.

Therefore, Joseph plainly states:

1. What they did to him, he recognizes as evil, but he also recognizes that what they did to him was a part of God's plan
2. He clearly states his intentions toward them—he will provide both for them and their little ones

### The Death of Joseph

**So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house; and Joseph lived 110 years.** [Gen. 50:22]

At this point in time, we have a new author. Joseph lived another twenty or thirty years in Egypt as a ruler with his family and he did not write any additional Scripture. We do not know who added this passage of five verses. It could have been Ephraim or Judah. Bear in mind that these traditions were carried along verbally, insofar as we know, for the book of Genesis (Moses clearly wrote the other 4 books of the Pentateuch, as God ordered him to).

In any case, although I have heard that some theologians allow for the possibility that an author of Scripture could predict his own death and the details pertaining thereto, but it is unnatural and unnatural without reason. Even though there is a difference between the book of Genesis and the book of Exodus, they almost fit together as one seamless narrative. This is because they came from the hand of God. You will notice the same ease of transition from Deuteronomy to Joshua. Now it is very possible that Joseph is still dictating Scripture at this time and

continues to do so in dying grace, realizing that he is about to die. In this case, the only verse not written by Joseph would likely be the last verse of this chapter, which could have been added by anyone, including the Scribe who recorded this information from the mouth of Joseph in the first place (assuming that he was too weak to write himself).

**And Joseph saw to Ephraim children of the third generation; even the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh were born upon Joseph's knees. [Gen. 50:23]**

The literal word here is *to bear* or *to beget*; but this does not mean that Joseph became a midwife. The use of this word here extends to the training and upbringing of these boys. Joseph was involved from birth up until their adult life. It is elliptical, meaning that not everything is stated here. Being born upon Joseph's knee actually implies the training and education of these children.<sup>163</sup> It is obvious that Joseph took part in the lives of both of his sons, more so than did Jacob, who restricted himself to Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph, even as the ruler of Egypt, had time for his family.

**And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob." [Gen. 50:24]**

Literally, Joseph says, *in visiting, God will visit you*. This conveys to us the absolute certainty of Joseph the God will come for the children of Israel and bring them back to Canaan. If someone else wrote this portion, they focused upon Joseph and not upon themselves. What Joseph has to say is important. It is also interesting that, even though Joseph is one of the youngest of the brothers, several of his brothers survive him (possibly all of them).

**Then Joseph took an oath of the sons of Israel, saying, "God will visit you and you will carry up my bones from here." [Gen. 50:25]**

The verb *visit* is doubled in this verse, indicating that it receives great emphasis. This means that Joseph knows that without a doubt, God will visit Israel, perhaps many generations later, and that he does not want to be left in Egypt when his people claim the land given them by God. **By faith, Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel and gave orders concerning his bones.** (Heb. 11:22)

Joseph has gathered his entire family there and has given them specific instructions. His are different than Jacob's. Jacob told his sons to bury him early on in the land of Canaan. Joseph will remain in state in Egypt, above ground, as a sign to future generations. It seems like R. B. Thieme, Jr. referred to his casket as the Bible of the Jewish people in Egypt. The child would ask, "Why is Joseph in a casket designed to be moved?" And the answer would cover the promises which God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

A lot will transpire over the next 400 years and it will be imperative that they people have something to influence their decisions. That influence will be Joseph's body. That will be their Bible. We do not know what happens to the portion of Scripture which had been recorded up until that time; certainly God preserved it and it somehow ended up in the hands of Moses some 400 years later. It is my own opinion that it was memorized from generation to generation by dozens, hundreds or possibly thousands of people. Moses probably learned it and committed it to writing when with the people during the time that he gave the messages of Deuteronomy to them. What Moses would have done is simply written it all down; but he would have updated many of the geographical references.

**So Joseph died, being 110 years old and they embalmed him and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt. [Gen. 50:26]**

Although the Egyptians went through the very elaborate embalming process heretofore described, most were buried without a coffin. This is an atypical *burial* inasmuch as there is a coffin and no burial. Nothing has been

---

<sup>163</sup> Bullinger, p. 61

said about burying Joseph because he was not placed into a tomb or into the ground, but his coffin was kept above ground as a constant reminder to his children and his children's children.

### The Addendum to Genesis 50

I may want to move this to the end of Genesis and include the citation

Parallels Between Joseph and the Lord Jesus Christ		
Similarities	Joseph	Our Lord Jesus Christ
1. Special objects of their father's love	Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons...Gen. 37:3a	And they heard [lit., <i>behold</i> ] a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My Son, the Beloved One, in Whom I am well-pleased. Matt. 3:3 See also John 3:35 5:20
2. Hated by their brothers	And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and they therefore hated him and could not speak to him peacefully. Gen. 37:4 See also v. 8	But, in order that the word may be fulfilled that stand written in the law, <i>They have hated Me without a cause.</i> John 15:25
3. Provided bread for those who desired it (the true bread provided by Christ was of a spiritual nature)	And all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth. Gen. 41:57	Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." John 6:35
4. Their claims of superior authority were rejected by their brothers	Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words. Gen. 37:8	And, after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a staff in His right hand; and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Matt. 27:27 See also Matt. 21:37-39 Mark 15:16-19 John 15:24-25
5. The brothers of Joseph conspire to kill him; the Jews, racial brothers of our Lord, conspire to kill Him.	When they saw him [Joseph] from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. Gen. 37:18	Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; and they plotted together to seize Jesus by subterfuge, and kill Him. Matt. 26:3-4
6. Joseph's <i>death</i> was associated with the blood of an animal; the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was associated with the blood of sacrificial animals	So they took Joseph's coat and slaughtered a male goat, and dipped the coat into the blood. Gen. 37:31	For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...He [Jesus Christ], having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God. Heb. 10:4, 10b, 12



7. Both Joseph and our Lord were innocent of any offense which should result in death	And Reuben said, "Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy [Joseph]'; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood. Gen. 42:22	Although He had done no violence nor was there any deceit in His mouth. Isa. 53:9d [Pilate] went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him." John 18:38b
8. Both Joseph and our Lord experienced two deaths	The he [Jacob] examined it [Joseph's coat] and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!" Gen. 37:33 So Joseph died at the age of 110 years and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. Gen. 37:33 50:26	His grave was...with a rich man in His deaths...Isa. 53:9a,c Our Lord died twice on the cross: once for our sins when He died spiritually, being separated from God ("My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Mark 15:43b); and then, after He had been judged for our sins, he died physically, at the end of his crucifixion ("Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit." And having said this, He breathed His last. Luke 23:46b).
9. Joseph returns from his death as a triumphant ruler; Our Lord returns from His death as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords	And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Gen. 37:41	Jesus Christ, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Rev. 1:4b,d And on His robe and on His thigh, He has a name written: "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." Rev. 19:16
10. In their second advents, each became a blessing to the Gentiles	When the famine was over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the graineries and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. And all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth. Gen. 41:56–57	These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 10:5–6 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and yo will be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the most remote parts of the earth." Acts 1:8
11. Each took a bride from the Gentiles	Now, before the year of famine arrived, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, priest of On [Heliopolis], bore to him. Gen. 41:50	For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself the savior of the body. Eph. 5:23 (see also vv. 24–33)

<p>12. Both Joseph and our Lord became reconciled to their brethren after their deaths and exalted them</p>	<p>Then he [Joseph] kissed all his brothers and wept on them; and afterward his brothers talked with him. Gen. 45:14 (see also vv. 1–15)</p>	<p>So it shall come about when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call [these things] to heart [while] in all the nations where the Lord you God has banished you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the Lord you God will restore you from captivity and have compassion upon you and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord you God has scattered you...and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. Gen. 30:1–4, 5b</p>
---	--	---

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

For 400 years, the people of Israel were born, married, had children, and died. After a century or so passed, no one actually knew Joseph; all they had was this coffin, not buried but kept above ground, with instructions that it is to be moved when the people pick up and move out of Egypt back to the land of Canaan. For 400 years, throughout several generations of Jews who were born and lived out their lives in Egypt, they had this coffin of Joseph and when a child asked about it, they were told the marvelous story about Joseph, about how God promoted him to the second highest position in Egypt and how he preserved his family, their ancestors, through God's guidance. And how this coffin was never buried because it will travel back to the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when the Jews travel back there themselves. So every Jew knew that their stay in Egypt was temporary, that their father Jacob rested in the land of Canaan, and that someday, the Jews would return to the land given them by God.

For reasons unclear, there are some Egyptian archeologists searching for Joseph's tomb in Egypt; notably, Professor Moussa, who had been involved in systematic excavation between the years 1962 and 1978, primarily in Sakkara, which is one of the several *cities of the dead* in Egypt. Had Joseph been buried in Egypt, being rich and powerful, he would have been buried in a spacious, underground vault, not unlike the American bomb shelters out of the 1950's. This vault would have been divided into two underground chambers, the outer one for mourners and caretakers. This outside chamber would have hieroglyphics and murals which would give a history of that person and their most famous deeds. The second chamber contained the deceased and several provisions, and it had been sealed off after the burial, making it inaccessible.

Stephen, prior to being martyred, gave probably the best overall view of the past few chapters: **And the patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. And God was with him and rescued him from all his afflictions and gave him grace and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and [over] all his household. Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan and great affliction and our fathers could find no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers [there] the first time. And on the second [visit] Joseph made himself known to his brothers and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent word and invited Jacob, his father, and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons. And Jacob went down to Egypt and passed away, he and our fathers.**

Internal Links

**Beginning of Document/  
Chapter Summaries**

**External Links**

**Genesis Chapter Links**

---