

**GOD'S MESSAGES
BIBLE
COMMENTARY
SERIES**

VOLUME 1

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).

**COMMENTARY
ON
THE BOOK
OF
GENESIS**

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General Preface

The present writer has found two books of the Bible to be of the utmost interest. These two books are the first and the last; the beginning and the end.

As a small child, sitting in his mother's lap, the record of Adam and Eve was read to him. Was it real, or was it a fairy tale? Did Adam and Eve really live, or was this like Jack and the Beanstalk?

The years of youth were spent on a dairy farm. The curiosity concerning the sky, the earth and the water which fell as rain grew increasingly impressive. Also there came a recognition of right and wrong. But why was it or wrong to murder another human? Animals fought to the death with their rivals. Was there truly One who could define sin and then punish those who defied the plan?

College years saw enrollment in a Christian college. Books were read which had been written by both atheistic and Christian authors. It was found that there were extremely intelligent minds in both camps. The interest which had long been present concerning the world of nature led to concentrated studies in the field of natural science. This ultimately led to master's degree and a teaching career at the university level. At the same time the interest in the Biblical explanations of the origin and purpose of the universe led to a master's degree in the field of Bible and public speaking.

One of the most interesting events in the life of this present author occurred when he was selected as a representative of the science teachers of the state of Tennessee to attend the one hundredth anniversary of Darwin's publication of "Origin of Species." This provided an opportunity to ride from the hotel room to the lecture hall in close company with several of the world's famous evolutionary thinkers. When all was said and done, the explanations given in the Bible seemed to carry far

more weight than the offerings of such men as Harlow Shapley and Julian Huxley. The Bible presented a superior explanation of the nature and consequences of sin than did the tongues and pens of the evolutionists.

Previous to the above described set of experiences at the evolutionary anniversary the author came into contact with a Bible teacher who was also a doctor in the field of mathematics. It seemed that this presented a very unusual opportunity. Here was a fine logician who also had attended a theological seminary and had preached the gospel for a number of years.

Upon entering the office of the said professor the writer asked that two critical points be considered. First, Is there truly a God? Second, If there is a God, can it be proven that the Bible is His message to humanity? The response to the two questions was both positive and inspiring. Yes, there is a God. Yes, the Bible is His message to humanity.

In departing from the professor's office, this writer turned and made the following statement. "Thank you for the information you have provided. I will spend the rest of my life trying to pass these truths on to as many others as are willing to listen.

I have now preached for over fifty years and have written twenty-nine volumes of commentary on the entire Bible, consisting of some twelve thousand pages. I am aware of the kindness of Jehovah in allowing me the privilege of attempting to help others understand the greatest book which has ever been written. To the Lord belongs the glory, the honor and the praise. I could not even exist without Him. I am but a servant. I desire with all my heart, soul, mind and strength to one day rest in the everlasting arms of Jesus. How much sweeter that might be if every reader of this set of commentaries could join me in that place of joy and rest.



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Introduction To Genesis

Author:

Students of the Holy Scriptures are divided in their conviction as to the author of this first book of what we know as the “Pentateuch.” The majority of the conservative commentators believe Moses was the author. This stand is taken mostly because of references in both the old and new testaments indicating Moses was the penman.

However, because Moses lived long after the events recorded in Genesis took place, there are many today who believe that several other writers recorded this material, after which time Moses combined their work to produce this first book of the Bible.

In the present commentary I am going to assume that Moses received the information from the mind of God, and that he then wrote it for the spiritual edification of all who lived after him.

Date:

According to the Biblical dates, as given in the text, Moses lived from about 1520 B.C. until 1400 B.C. Assuming him to be the writer, the date must then fall between those limits. Though it is impossible to pin the date down with great precision, it does seem reasonable to assign the writing to the latter part of the one hundred twentieth year of this great leader of God’s people.

Purpose:

The word “Genesis” means origins or beginnings. Man has always attempted to discover the facts concerning the beginning of the universe in which we live. Has it existed forever? Was it brought into existence by mere chance? Was there an eternal mind which was responsible for it’s beginnings? The Bible flatly declares that Jehovah is eternal. It also states that it was He who spoke the heavens and the earth into being. This present book of Genesis tells of the origin of many different things. Among these things are:

1. The origin of heaven and earth.
2. The origin of plant and animal life.
3. The origin of man.
4. The origin of sin.
5. The origin of death.
6. The origin of God’s plan for redemption.

A Brief Outline:

- I. The Creation
- II. The Fall
- III. The Flood
- IV. The Choice of Abraham
- V. The Birth of Jacob and Esau
- VI. The Birthright passed to Jacob
- VII. The Twelve Sons of Jacob (Israel)
- VIII. Jacob Is Sold Into Egyptian Bondage
- IX. Joseph Rises to Rulership in Egypt
- X. Death of Jacob and Joseph.





**The Book Of
GENESIS**



Chapter 1

GEN 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

This first verse of the Bible is a most astounding passage. There is much more here than first meets the eye. I am convinced that an in depth study of the verse by an honest and able mind would provide sufficient evidence to prove man was not the author of the work. Will the reader please allow me the honor of presenting some of that evidence?

First, the verse states there was a beginning for the heaven and the earth. Anything which had a beginning is neither eternal nor omnipotent. It is self contradictory to state that something was eternal and at the same time state that it had a beginning. The heaven and the earth are not omnipotent because something which had a beginning must have been brought into being by something else. Nothing comes from nothing. Anything which depended upon something else for its origin must not be omnipotent, or all powerful; but, that which existed forever must have been all powerful and completely self sufficient. God possesses both of these characteristics. He is both eternal and self-sufficient. The heaven and the earth are not.

Present day science agrees there was a beginning for the universe. The second law of thermodynamics is one of the most fundamental laws of nature. This law tells us a closed energy system will steadily become less organized until it finally becomes a chaotic mass of moving particles. This condition is known as the **heat death** of the universe. If the laws of the universe were both eternal and unchanging, the universe would have reached that heat death. Since it has not, there must

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have been a beginning point. The universe is like a pendulum which is gradually spending its energy and swinging slower and slower until it stops. Just as a pendulum must have had an outside source of energy to begin operating, our universe must have also had such a source. This first verse of Genesis informs us that source was the God of the Bible.

The matter or origins is vital. It has been fiercely debated between those who attribute the present universe to evolution and those who deny that evolution is a sufficient explanation. There are four levels of origin which leave the full fledged evolutionist mystified. They are: (1) The origin of matter and energy. (2) The origin of life. (3) The origin of consciousness. (4) The origin of human morality. I have seen numerous attempts at explanation of each of these four. I have never seen a successful one. I believe the Bible provides the only adequate explanation of all four.

Second, this verse includes in a single sentence the major factors of physics. As a teacher of science classes for over a third of a century, I taught my students there are some fundamental units which must be grasped before one begins to move in the field of physics. These fundamentals are space, mass and time. The first verse of Genesis includes all three of these, along with force and energy. In the beginning (time), God created the heaven (space) and the earth (mass).

Third, the verse contains a numerical system which is far beyond the capabilities of any human or group of humans. The number seven is unique in the Bible. It is often used as a symbol of perfection or completeness. In six days God created the heaven and the earth, and rested on the seventh. There were seven lamps on the candlestick in the temple of Solomon. The book of Revelation is filled with sevens; seven churches of Asia,

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seven vials, seven seals, seven thunders, etc. In this first verse of Genesis there are seven words. There are not seven in the English. But the ten English words are translated from seven Hebrew words. In addition, there are many multiples of seven found in the verse. I will list a few. Before listing them, I would point out that both the Hebrew language and the Greek are similar to the Latin in that letters represent numbers. In the Latin X = 10, I = 1, C = 100, etc. In the Hebrew, the first nine letters of the alphabet represent the values 1 through 9. The next nine letters represent the values 10 through 90. The next four letters represent the values 100 through 400.

1. There are 7 words.
2. There are 28 letters.
3. The first three words contain 14 letters.
4. The last four words contain 14 letters.
5. The middle word and the one before it contain 7 letters.
6. The middle word and the one after it contain 7 letters.
7. The three nouns, God, Heaven and Earth contain 14 letters.
8. The numerical value of the three nouns is 777.
9. The value of the first and last letters of all of the seven words is 1393, or 7×199 .
10. Numerical value of the first, last and middle words is 1610 or 7×230 .

C. Z. Ozanne has listed more than fifty of these multiples of seven which are found in this one verse of scripture. Now, I challenge any man to place any



numerical value he chooses upon the letters of the English language and arrive at a sentence which incorporates the combination of multiples of seven which we see built into this one verse. If the reader cares to investigate this matter farther, the information I have cited is found in C. Z. Ozanne's book entitled, *The First Seven Thousand Years*, published by Exposition Press, New York, 1970.

The Hebrew word translated into the English word "created" does not allow a simple rearrangement of that which previously existed. The word demands ex-nihilo creation. God created the heaven and the earth. He brought them out of nothing.

GEN 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The Hebrew words for "without form" and "void" are *tohu* and *bohu*. The best picture I have of an earth without form is that of the plasma state. Most of us are aware of the solid, liquid and gaseous states of matter. However, there is a fourth state of matter. It is the plasma state. If one adds energy to the solid state there is often a transition from the solid to the liquid. If further energy is added, the liquid evaporates and becomes gaseous. If one continues to add energy, there comes a time in which the electrons are stripped from the nuclei of the atoms, and at that point we have a plasma. My conception of the description of an earth without form is that of a plasma. In that condition all of the elements would be absent. There would only be a chaos of subatomic particles.

Some have introduced the idea that the word "was" in this verse means "became." They see this original

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condition of the universe as chaotic, and since God would not create anything which is not perfect, they believe it became tohu and bohu, or without form and void, after an original creation. They believe in sin before Adam. This sin would then have been responsible for the chaos. They often make the attempt to connect the rebellion of the angels with this supposed deterioration. There are several references to spiritual beings leaving their assigned dominion and following Satan in fighting against God. The Bible will not allow this meaning of the verse. If the reader will pick up twenty-five different translations of the Old Testament and examine the word “was”, he will find that almost without exception the scholars have rendered it “was” and not “became.” Also, we are told that sin entered the world through Adam (I Cor. 15:22). For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The above is often known as the “gap theory” because it supposedly provides a great period of time between the original creation and the recreation which those who hold this view believe is occurring in all the verses of Genesis one and two except chapter one, verse one. This effort is usually an attempt to harmonize modern science with the scriptures. There was a time in which I personally made such efforts to bring science and the Bible together. I no longer do that. My experience and study have persuade me the Bible is far more dependable than evolutionary theory. Until the reader is able to sit down with the Word of God and be willing to be led as a child wherever it may lead, he will never extract the wonders which it offers. Truth cannot be broken or bent without unexpected consequences.

A “void” earth is one which is empty or uninhabited. It would be the condition before God created the various



living creatures, including plants, animals, and man himself. It seems to me the remainder of chapters one and two of Genesis are a clear explanation of what was meant by tohu and bohu.

There three persons in the one Godhead. They are God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three were present in the creation. The three seem to each have a slightly different role in the origination and maintenance of the universe. God the Father is often the source of being. Ideas are formed through his mind. God the Son often acts as the spokesman for these ideas. He is known as the Word of God. God the Holy Spirit can be seen as the energizer who brings the ideas into reality and maintains order.

In accordance with the above paragraph, God the Father is seen as the source of being for the heaven and earth. God the Son spoke them into existence, and God the Holy Spirit brooded over the deep, ready to bring order out of that which was without form and void.

Two words are used here in a sense I think is somewhat different than we would ordinarily use them. These are the words "waters" and "deep." When we combine the two the average reader is likely to picture a very great mass of water such as we drink. This view is reinforced by the fact that just a few verses down in the chapter, we are told that the waters above the firmament were divided from the waters below the firmament. It is important to remember that this original condition was formless. I doubt that water, as we know it today, fits that description. We must also remember that enormous changes were occurring at this time. I have reason to believe the "waters" of this verse were not identical with the waters which resulted when God divided the waters from the waters.





**GEN 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.**

Light is one of the unsolved puzzles of science. The greatest scientists of the ages have struggled with two concepts. These are gravity and light. Let me illustrate. Galileo was very important in the first use of the telescope. He did not invent it, but he was one of the very first to use it in studying the light from the stars. Isaac Newton used prisms to separate white light into the various colors of the rainbow, and then recombined the components into white light. He was also the one who gave us the laws of motion and gravitation. Albert Einstein is best known for his development of the theory of relativity. It is not as well known that the scientific paper which first caused him to be recognized as a genius was a paper on the nature of light.

In spite of the genius of such men, we still do not completely understand either gravity or light. There are some experiments which work today when we assume that light is made up of particles. There are other experiments which work only if we assume that light is made up of waves. There is a deep conflict here which does not appear to the non-physicist.

I would like to make reference to another matter which intrigues me. The electrons which orbit the nuclei of atoms travel at enormous velocities, even approaching the velocity of light. A strange thing about these electrons is that they have only certain permitted positions within the atom. They may be found in some positions but not in others. But, these electrons seem to be able to move from one permitted position to another in no time. It is as if we had a person who could be found in the kitchen of a house, or could be found in the bedroom at the other end of the house. Sometimes he is in the kitchen. Sometimes he is in the bedroom. But he is never in the



rooms between the kitchen and the bedroom. In order for this to happen, the person would have to be able to travel from the kitchen to the bedroom in no time. Now Einstein tells us that as the velocity of an object approaches the speed of light, time slows down. Following this pattern, if an object reached the velocity of light, time would stop. This would mean the object could be in one position, and then in another, without the passage of time. Add to this the fact that the Bible teaches God is light and that God is omnipresent. This is something to chew on. Just what is the relationship between God and the light which he spoke into existence in this third verse of Genesis one?

Just what is included in this word light? Today we know visible light is but one of an entire family of electromagnetic waves. In addition to visible light, we have infrared light, ultraviolet light, X-rays, radio, and even cosmic radiation. Could the meaning of this verse be that at this point God brought the entire electromagnetic spectrum into being?

As a last comment on this verse, light has three important effects. It is an illuminator, allowing us to find our way. It is a purifier, destroying disease germs. It is also an energizer, providing us with the means of life and movement. There is a strong parallel between physical and spiritual light. Each performs these three functions in its own realm.

**GEN 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.**

Here is the first of several statements by God that he was well satisfied with the progress of creation. At this time there was no scar of sin. There was no grief, no tears, no death. Satan had not yet made his mark.

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The primary message of this verse is that there was neither day nor night. The processes were about to begin which would bring this sequence into action. Darkness is the absence of light. That, however is not the sense in which it is used in this verse. The situation must have been something like a continuous dawn or twilight. This would not have been an ideal condition for the life God was about to create. A period of darkness needed to be followed by a period of light.

GEN 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And so, God caused the first day. This is the first mention of the word “day.” It comes from the Hebrew yom. In spite of men’s efforts to make these first six days be immense eras of time, the Bible defines this day with great simplicity. It is a day which has a light part and a dark part. It is a day which has an evening and a morning. How sad it is that men have struggled so much to help God and inject time enough for the evolutionary development of the universe? If the reader will turn to Exodus 20:11-12, he will find further evidence that these six days of Genesis one were days with evenings and mornings rather than eras of time. There we are told, But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. The Sabbath day which the Israelites were to keep was not a long era; it was a day with a light and



a dark part, with an evening and a morning.

I might mention that there are some who do not believe it is right to take the Lord's Supper on Sunday evening. They believe the first day of the week begins on Saturday evening and ends on Sunday evening at sundown.

GEN 1:6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

Again God said. It is my understanding that this is what John was referring to when, in his account of the gospel, he said, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

This time God spoke a firmament into existence. This firmament divided two classes of waters. Following the placing of the firmament, there were waters above it and waters below it. I believe the waters above the firmament were the gaseous water in the form of water vapor above the solid earth. The waters below the firmament would then be the liquid water in the condensed form.

The word "firmament" is literally "a stretched out expanse". The first four letters of this word lead us to believe it is speaking of some solid substance. That is not the case. Those who criticize the Bible as accepting, or instigating, the "crystalline sphere" idea of the Greeks have not done their homework well. One recent translation of the Old Testament renders this Greek word as "horizon". This may be a fairly accurate translation of the term before us. The waters above the horizon would



be in the form of water vapor. Those below the firmament would be liquid in form.

GEN 1:7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

We have here merely a statement that what God had commanded actually took place. There was now a line of demarcation between the water vapor in the air and the liquid water below.

GEN 1:8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

The careful reader will now wonder if my previous view of the firmament as a horizon is correct. This verse seems to indicate it is the entirety of space above the line of demarcation. I admit the problem. However; I think this heaven begins with **the line of demarcation** and extends outward from there.

The Bible speaks of three heavens. The first is that where the birds fly. The second is the one where the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, stars and planets are found. The third is the abode of the Heavenly Father. The one mentioned in this verse is the first heaven.

GEN 1:9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

The waters under the heaven would be the liquid and solid forms. It is impossible for us to know whether or



not ice would have been present, since the temperature of the creation week is not revealed. At any rate, a separation occurred between the land the water. There is no reason at all for us to believe this took eons of time. God spoke, and it was so.

GEN 1:10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

Each of the three major divisions of the ecosphere had been brought into existence. In physical science classes they would be referred to as the Lithosphere (solid portion), the Atmosphere (gaseous portion), and the hydrosphere (liquid portion). In these first days of the creation, they are the Earth, the Sea and the Heaven.

The reader may wish to reflect upon the words of Revelation where we are told the old heaven and earth fled away, to be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, and there was no more sea.

GEN 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

By this time, the earth could no longer be described as tohu, or waste. It had reached a high level of organization. However, it was still bohu, or void and uninhabited. This was to receive immediate attention. Three forms of vegetation were brought forth. There was grass. There were herbs and there were trees.

If a science class takes a field trip into a wooded area, the teacher can easily point out these three classes. By standing at the edge of a stand of forest, one can see the grass carpeting the lowest level of the forest. The grass



may reach a height of six inches to two feet. Next one can see a second level consisting of bushes and herbs. These typically reach heights of five to eight feet. Then, towering above both of these first two levels are the trees, reaching for the sky itself.

GEN 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

According to the will of the Creator, the three kinds of vegetation took their place in the unfolding global home of man. Each was given the capability of reproducing itself. Grass often reproduces by sending roots through the ground. Herbs and trees reproduce by producing seed and fruit.

Right here I want to talk about the word “kind”, as it is used in the scriptures with reference to types of living things. God did not have to consult with Carolus Linnaeus, the originator of our modern classification system for plants and animals. Today, we speak of phyla, classes, orders, families, geniuses and species. The “kinds” mentioned in Genesis one were definitely not species. They may have been closer to what we presently know as phyla. You will notice that there were only three kinds of plant life. I will add to this when we reach the creation of animal life.

GEN 1:13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

Three days had now passed by. There were six days of creative activity altogether. Therefore, timewise, the creation was half completed. Again, the evening and the

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morning are a definitive part of each of these days. They were not eras of time.

**GEN 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:**

As the fourth day commenced, God began to create the second heaven. The heavenly bodies were to be brought into being and put into their proper movement. The laws of planetary motion seem to have been established. The earth would have begun orbiting the sun and the moon placed in orbit about the earth. The rotation of the earth would have produced day and night. The orbiting and the tilt of the earth with respect to the sun would have resulted in the seasons.

One objection which is aimed at the Bible by skeptics is that day and night are said to have existed before the creation of the sun. This would mean that day and night, or evening and morning could not have occurred before the fourth day. But, this is not a valid conclusion. God does not require the sun as a source of light. The tail of a firefly gives off cold light. If the firefly can produce intermittent light from its tail, why could God not produce periodic light separate from the existence of the sun? It is my belief that day and night were controlled in a different manner before the creation of the sun.

In connection with the wonders of the motion of heavenly bodies, I would like to display a quote from Isaac Newton. I believe Newton was the greatest of all the physical scientists. Someone asked Newton whether or not it was possible that the structure and motion of the heavenly bodies could have come about without the intervention of a Creator. Here is his answer!





“To make this system, with all its motions, required a Creator which understood and compared together the quantities of matter in the several bodies of the sun and planets, and the gravitating powers resulting from thence, the several distances of the primary planets from the sun, and the secondary ones from Saturn, Jupiter and the earth, and the velocities with which these planets could revolve at those distances about those quantities of matter in the central bodies. And to compare and adjust all these things together in so great a variety of bodies argues that cause not to be blind and fortuitous, but very well versed in mechanics and geometry.

I do not know of any power in nature which could cause this transverse motion with the divine arm. — Gravity may put the planets into motion, but without the divine power, it could never put them into such circulating motion as they have about the sun, and therefore, for this reason, as well as others, I am compelled to ascribe the frame of this system to an intelligent agent.

From a blind metaphysical necessity, which of course is the same always and everywhere, no variety could originate. The whole diversity of created things, in regard to times and places, could have its origin only in the ideas and the will of a necessarily existing BEING.”

In my own opinion, no man has yet improved upon the answer given by this master scientist.

**GEN 1:15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.**



Had it not already been said that God said, "Let there be light, and there was light"? Yes it had. But this time the light is to be provided by the sun, moon and stars. Previously the light may have been produced in some manner beyond our own present day experience.

**GEN 1:16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.**

My father, for some time, was somewhat skeptical of portions of the Bible. My uncle was an elder in the congregation of the church. I can recall the two of them arguing at the table after our evening meal one time. My uncle had said something about the creation of the sun, moon and stars. My father raised an objection based on this verse. He asked the question, "If God made the moon to rule the night, why does it not do it? After all the moon shines sometimes during the daylight hours. Dad could be a bit picky about such things. The sun clearly dominates the daylight hours while the moon does the same at night.

**GEN 1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,**

Here, the firmament has to be more than merely the horizon. This is the second heaven. The sun and moon were placed, according to the scriptures, by just such a divine arm as Isaac Newton postulated.

**GEN 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.**



Some have offered a different explanation for the occurrence of days with an evening and a morning before the setting of the dominion of the sun, moon and stars. They suggest that these heavenly bodies were created before the fourth day, but that they were hidden by cloud cover and that they only appeared on the fourth day. Once again, I sense a straining of the straightforward meaning of the verses. We do not need to extricate God from any difficulties which might arise between the statements of the Bible and the processes of modern day natural processes. The Bible is completely trustworthy when taken in its plain meaning.

**GEN 1:19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.**

With the completion of the fourth day, we have the land and the sea. We have both the heaven where the birds fly and the heaven where the heavenly bodies are found. The sun, moon and stars are in their places and grass, herbs and trees are flourishing and reproducing themselves.

**GEN 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.**

Animal forms of life begin to appear on the fifth day. It is not usually noted that the source of both the fowls and the fish seem to be the waters. I leave it to the reader to draw his or her own conclusion as to whether this verse tells us the birds came from the seas.



**GEN 1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.**

From this verse, we can see that the waters mentioned in the previous verse are obviously the seas. I do not think the living creatures of this verse include the land animals. They are listed later, on the sixth day. These living creatures were those who inhabited the seas, lakes and rivers. The winged fowls, however, are included. Birds have a different origin than do the animals created on the sixth day.

**GEN 1:22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.**

We do find the term “kind” again. But, again, the term “kind” does not indicate a biological species. It denotes a very broad class of water living animals, or of birds.

The command was given for them to be fruitful and multiply, with the fish, etc. to populate the seas and the birds to help populate the earth.

**GEN 1:23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.**

There is but one more day before God ceases his creativity. However, that one day is a very eventful one for man.

**GEN 1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and**



**creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.**

There are three more “kinds” which now appeared. They are cattle, beasts of the earth and creeping things. We now have a list of eight kinds. They are: grass, trees and herbs, water creatures, birds, cattle, beasts of the field and creeping things. It was these major classes of living things which God said were to reproduce after their kind.

The staunch organic evolutionist will tell us all animal life originated from either one or a very few ocean dwelling organisms. Some Christians go to an opposite extreme and claim that God originally created every species of animal and vegetable in the beginning. It is important that we allow God to define his kinds and that we not extend the number he listed.

There is strong evidence that life appeared in explosive fashion. The major forms of life appear well developed and at a similar time period. I believe many of the minor variations of life today originated from the major “kinds” God created during the first six days. Thus, we could have lions, tigers, leopards, bobcats and housecats, and still say that all of these had reproduced after their kind. I see room in the scriptures for considerable modification with kinds. I do not see room for a transition from one major kind to another. I do not believe the Bible allows us to accept transition from grass to trees, nor of fish to beasts of the field.

**GEN 1:25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.**



Subhuman life had now arrived on the scene. Up to this point, we are told God considered all things to be good. This was said after each of the major phases of creation. It had been said after the light was created, after the physical world was created, after the sun, moon and stars had been created, and now it was repeated after the creation of vegetable and animal life.

**GEN 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.**

We come now to what appears to be the reason for all which occurred previously. In this grand universe, God is ready to place a form of life far different from anything which had yet appeared. It was to be superior to the physical world, the vegetable world, and the animal world. This form of life was to be created in God's image. All else which had taken place seems to have been the preparation of a dominion over which this life created in God's image might live and rule.

I have heard and read from biology teachers who condemn Christians for drawing authority from this verse for the spoilage of the earth. If men have placed that meaning on the verse, they are mistaken. God did not, in this verse, give man the right to wreak havoc upon the universe. He did give him the responsibility of ruling over it. The man who owns a farm is a fool if he decides he can treat that farm in any way he chooses. Henry Ford once bought up hundreds of acres of land in the state of Michigan. He used this land to grow soybeans which were used to make parts for his motor vehicles.



After several years of raising soybeans without rotation of crops, many of the farms were reduced to very poor condition. My own parents purchased some of the land which had been abused in this fashion. It took us a number of years to bring it back to full productivity.

But, what does it mean to be created in the image of God. In order to answer this question, we must examine the very nature of God. God is conscious. God is powerful. God has freedom to choose his path of action. God is able to recognize good and evil.

I believe that in each of these senses, man has been created in God's image. We have help in this matter from the book of Hebrews. We are told in Hebrews 1:3 that Jesus Christ is the express image of God's person. It is clear to me that Jesus came into this world to show us what man was meant to be from the beginning. We were created in the image of God. We sinned and stained that image. Jesus accepted the challenge of emptying himself of the glory he had in heaven, being born of a woman, becoming flesh and dwelling among us, and returning us to the image God intended.

To be made in the image of God is not synonymous with being God. Man has many of the characteristics of God, but in a lesser degree. For example, man is conscious of his surroundings. However, man's consciousness is limited. He knows a few things. God knows anything he chooses to know. Man is powerful. He can move mountains and build great bridges and buildings. However, man's power is limited. He can do a few things. God can do anything he chooses to do. Man is a ruler. He exerts his will over the fish, the fowls, the beasts of the earth and the physical elements which make up the earth. However, man's rulership is limited. He rules over a few things. God rules over whatever he chooses.

Perhaps the most interesting of all the characteristic which men share with God is that of recognition of good



and evil. Animals are conscious to a degree. They are powerful to a degree. They sometimes rule over a small dominion. But, animals do not recognize good and evil. They only recognize the consequences of certain actions. A dog can be taught to jump through a hoop burning with fire. He is taught by rewarding him when he jumps and punishing him when he does not. Unlike this simple recognition of temporary punishment and reward, man's recognition can be extended to the very nature of eternity. There are actions which are right or wrong because they have eternal significance. Man is capable of receiving such information from the mind of God and reacting appropriately. When man rejects this information and acts contrary to it, we call his transgression sin. Man is not capable of defining sin because he cannot see the end from the beginning. He is, however, capable of understanding that there is such a thing as good and evil with eternal consequences.

**GEN 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.**

God does not need to reproduce. Therefore, there is no need for both a male and a female nature. It was God's will that man reproduce. Therefore God made mankind male and female. There are some religious groups who hold to the idea that God actually has a body. I believe that to be a false concept. It is true that the Bible speaks of the face of God, the finger of God, the arm of God and hand of God. These are only anthropomorphic terms intended to convey a particular point or idea.

**GEN 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish**





**the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

God had blessed man in bringing him into being. This blessing spoken of in this verse indicates that God did not cease blessing man by creating him. He continued to provide man with whatever he might need. He provided fertile soil, animals as beasts of burden, fresh air, water and food.

Then God gave man the command to multiply and replenish the earth and to have dominion over all he had created. The sin which took place in the Garden of Eden was punished by causing the woman to bear children in anguish. It is tempting to think that there was some connection between partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and sexual activity. This cannot be proven. God intended sexual reproduction when he created man as male and female. Sexual activity is not contrary to the will of God. Marriage is honorable and the bed is undefiled.

**GEN 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.**

In the beginning man was vegetarian. Here, we find the law of exclusion in action. Man was told what he could eat. God did not have to say, You are not to eat of the animal world. He specified what man could eat. All else was excluded. Those readers who wish to take issue with my position here need to turn over to the eighth

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chapter of Genesis. After the flood had subsided and man exited from the ark, God placed a bow in the sky for a covenant with man that the earth would never again be destroyed by water. God repeated his command to man to multiply and replenish the earth. He placed the dread and fear of man upon all living creatures and spoke the following: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

At a later time God specified certain clean and unclean animals. Then, in New Testament times he told Peter he had abolished this clean and unclean classification (See Acts 10).

GEN 1:30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

Not only was man limited to vegetarianism, it seems the animal kingdom was also restricted to a vegetable diet, until after the departure from the ark. This may help us in understanding how the variety of animals which were taken into the ark were able to live peacefully with one another. Perhaps there was no such thing as a carnivorous animal at that time.

GEN 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.



The creation was complete. In six days God had created the entire universe and had placed it in operation. After each major phase of the creation God had declared it to be good. This time he added one more word. Behold, it was very good. God had prepared a home for man. He had then made man in his own image and placed him in that home. God had someone whom he could love, and who could love him. Satan might be waiting in the wings. But, he had not yet contaminated God's creation with his lies and destruction.

Chapter 2

GEN 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Verse one of chapter one told us, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. That statement was a headline for what has been recorded through the entire first chapter. Just as a news reporter begins a story with a headline which will be detailed as the story progresses, God gave us a headline and then provided details.

The “host of them” refers to all the many things which became a part of the universe. On several occasions the scriptures speak of the heavenly host. In those cases, the reference is limited to the sun, moon, stars and other heaven bodies. In this case, every object listed throughout chapter one is included.

GEN 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

After six evenings and mornings, God ceased his creative activity. The word “rested” is used in the sense of cessation rather than in recuperation. When a policeman stops a motorist to give him a traffic ticket for speeding, we say he arrested the motorist. He caused the motorist to cease his speeding. He did not give the motorist a rest. God does not require rest as men do.

GEN 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The seventh day was given special significance. We are told God sanctified it. When something is sanctified, it is set apart and dedicated to the service of God. Seventh

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Day Adventists hold that the seventh day of the week was set apart from the other six by God at this time as a Sabbath, and will continue to be hallowed until this heaven and earth shall be replaced by the new heaven and new earth.

There are two reasons for questioning this stand. One is that there is absolutely no indication that a Sabbath day was observed before the Israelites received the command to observe it in the wilderness shortly before they reached Mount Sinai. When the ten commandments were given, the observance of the Sabbath was included. The second reason for questioning the Adventist stand is found in Colossians 2:14-17. Those living in the Christian age are specifically told not to respect a Sabbath day. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

There is a Sabbath for Christians. However, it is not the seventh day of the week. It is the heavenly rest which comes after one has labored faithfully for a lifetime and goes on to meet the Lord. This rest is pictured by the Hebrew writer.

For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden



not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief (Heb. 4:4-11).

**GEN 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,**

Beginning with this fourth verse of chapter two we will see another view of the creation. This is claimed by some to be evidence of multiple authors of the book of Genesis. This conclusion is invalid. The first chapter deals with the creation in general. In the first chapter, the creation of man is given some prominence, but is for the most part given as one phase of the entire process. In the second chapter, the creation of man, and his position within God's entire creation, is given the focus of attention. Moses is the author of the book of Genesis. He had ample reason to pick out man as a unique part of the entire creation and discuss his special position in greater detail. That is what he did.

**GEN 2:5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.**



During the creation week, and apparently until the coming of the flood of Noah, it did not rain. When God first brought plant life into being, there were no humans to cultivate and harvest the plants.

**GEN 2:6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.**

A different form of water cycle existed. Rather than evaporation of water into the upper atmosphere and then condensation in the form of rain, the moisture arose from the earth in the form of mist. The plant life received sufficient moisture for proper growth, but it did not receive it in the form of rain. This did not preclude the flowing of water in streams and rivers, nor did it exclude ponds and lakes. The mist could have provided sufficient water to produce all of these phenomena.

**GEN 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**

I once looked at this verse and said to myself, "This verse tells what God did, but it does not tell precisely how he did it, nor whether it took five minutes or a century". I now know that outlook was an attempt on my part to help God out of a ditch. After all, modern science says it required millions of years for the evolution of man from a subhuman ancestry. Theistic evolutionists, who maintain that evolution occurred under the direction of Jehovah, sometimes express the view that this verse speaks of a point in time when the subhuman became human. God does not need that kind of help. The divine



revelation given in the Bible is far more dependable than the frail observations and logical processes of the best of scientists.

How long did it take for God to take the dust of the earth and breath life into it? It took place between the beginning of the sixth day and the beginning of the seventh day of the six day creation. God could and did create man in one day which had an evening and a morning, a light part and a dark part.

It is proper to observe that the body of man is composed of elements which are found in the earth. The majority of the naturally occurring chemical elements can be found in either sizable quantities, or in minute traces in the human body. At death the body returns to the dust from which it came (See Gen. 4:19).

**GEN 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.**

A special portion of the earth was made ready as a habitation for the first couple. It was described as a garden because it was especially beautiful and productive. Everything about the garden was arranged for the comfort and well being of the first humans.

Just where was this garden located. The verse places it eastward in Eden. There are several lines of evidence placing the origin of man in the area called Mesopotamia. At the time Moses wrote the book of Genesis, he was no doubt in the region between Egypt and Syria. If one checks the map, he will see that Ur of the Chaldees was located almost directly east of Palestine. From Moses point of view, the garden would have been eastward if it had been located in what is today called Iraq. Note that





the garden was not identical with Eden. It was planted in Eden. Obviously, there would have been no nation or country called Eden, since there were no humans to make up such a society. Moses is referring to a place known as Eden at the time he was writing.

This is not the only time Eden is mentioned in the Old Testament. In Genesis 4:16, Cain was sent out into the land of Nod on the east of Eden. In 2 Kings 19:12 and Isa. 37:12 the “children of Eden” are said to have been destroyed by the Assyrians, before the time of Sennacherib. This seems to place the garden somewhere in the Mesopotamian area.

Later, when the ark came to rest, it landed on Mount Ararat. This was relatively early in the history of man. There is an entire mountain range named Ararat in the western portion of Turkey. This would harmonize with an origin for man somewhere in that general part of the globe. I will come back to these lines of evidence when we look at verses ten through fourteen of this chapter.

**GEN 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.**

The garden was beneficial to man in every way. There was great beauty. There was also an abundance of food. Access to the tree of life assured man that he might live forever. Disease and corruption were unknown.

**GEN 2:10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.**



This verse supports what was said earlier about the garden not being identical with Eden. It was the garden of Eden because it was located in the vicinity of Eden. The river that watered the garden went out of Eden and entered into the garden to water it.

Does this verse say there were four tributaries which flowed into one larger river, or does it say there was one large river which subdivided into four smaller streams? In most cases today tributaries flow into one larger river. We do, however, have instances in which the reverse is true. The delta of the Nile is made up of many smaller streams which then empty into the Mediterranean.

Frankly, I cannot tell from the language here which is the case. The head of a river would seem to be the reverse of the mouth from which the water would be emitted. Yet the verse seems to say the one river parted to become four smaller streams. I must confess my ignorance. Perhaps the reader can do better.

**GEN 2:11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;**

The first of the four heads was Pison. It is said to have flowed around, or compassed the entire land of Havilah. The commentators seem hesitant to even hazard a guess as to the identity or location of Havilah.

**GEN 2:12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.**

The fact that there was good gold there, along with other valuable minerals does not seem to give an solid clue to the location of the river Pison.



**GEN 2:13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.**

The second of the four heads was Gihon. It was said to have flowed around, or surrounded, the land of Cush, which is understood to be another name for Ethiopia. Cush is connected later in the Bible with Arabia and the present land of Ethiopia.

**GEN 2:14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.**

The third of the four heads was Hiddekel. This time we have much more convincing information. Certain Assyrian inscriptions label the Tigris River as the Hiddekel. The connection in this verse with the name Assyria leaves us with a general idea of its geographical position.

The fourth head is Euphrates. This is one of the most mentioned rivers of the Bible. It marked the division between the land of captivity and the lands to the west. This may be the most definitive information we have in our attempt to locate the garden of Eden. We know the exact location of the present day Euphrates.

I believe the anthropologists are mistaken in searching through the continent of Africa for earliest man. It is my conclusion, in view of the evidence presented, that the garden of Eden was located in the area of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

I would caution the reader that at the time of the flood, the topography of the earth was no doubt altered radically. Some of the names given to rivers and lands after the flood may have been echoes from memories of



the past. It may be absolutely impossible to identify the site of the garden of Eden.

**GEN 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**

It is folly to ask how God put the Adam into the garden of Eden. We are not told, and we do not need to be told.

We are told that man was not placed in the garden to lie around and do nothing. He was given work to do from the beginning. Dressing and keeping the garden would have provided him a sense of accomplishment. The most miserable days I have ever spent were during a six months period in which I had rheumatic fever at the time I was twelve years of age. The doctor told me I must remain in bed for that entire six months. I was only to get out of bed long enough to go to the bathroom and back. At the end of that time I could push against the calf of my leg and the muscle would swing back and forth like a pendulum. Neither the mind nor the body of man remain in a healthy condition when placed in an inactive condition.

Man was not given license to abuse the garden. The Bible critics who accuse Christians of pillaging the globe through the authority given in Genesis chapter one are in serious need of further examination of God's commands.

**GEN 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:**

Law existed from the beginning. When god gives a command, that command is law. When the command is



ignored or rejected, man must face the consequences of attempting to direct his own steps. God had commanded man to dress and keep the garden. Now he gave a restriction. Thus we have the possibility of both major classes of sin; both omission and commission.

**GEN 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

What was it that man was not to do? He was free to eat of every tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was not to eat the fruit of that tree.

Was that tree symbolic or was it an actual tree with tasty fruit hanging from its branches? I believe it was both. It was an actual tree with fruit similar to all of the other trees which God had informed man were permissible food. Yet, the consumption of the fruit of that tree resulted in knowledge which only God had the right to possess. You ask me, How could the eating of fruit from a tree result in knowledge of good and evil? I answer that I do not know. There are also a good many others things I do not know. I find myself in much the same situation as Job when God began to ask him a series of questions. Job said, "I will lay my hand upon my mouth." There is great danger in attempting to allegorize the events of Genesis one through eleven.

At the same time, I am convinced the eating of the tree with the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil prefigures the rebellion of man under the instigation of Satan in every age. Satan would like to convince man he is wiser than God. When man takes that bait, he walks straight toward the lake of fire which has been prepared



for the Devil and his angels. He separates himself from God and is condemned to spiritual death.

If God said man would die in the day he took of the fruit of that tree, why did this not happen? Adam and Eve lived on for many years after this event. The death God talked of was of two kinds. One was physical death. The other was spiritual death. Physical death came upon man in that from that very day death became a part of man's experience. Spiritual death came upon him in from the day, he was separated from the form of communication he had enjoyed with God before the rebellion. Man was driven from the garden.

**GEN 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.**

Man is a social creature. He was created to love and be loved. It has been said that complete isolation from other persons will result in insanity over a period of time. To be more specific, man was created with the need for feminine companionship. Adam was not complete without a companion. God intended that the earth be populated with humans. The arrangement for accomplishing this objective was to create a team who would work together in multiplying and replenishing the earth.

We sometimes use the English word helpmate. This verse includes more than just providing a mate for Adam. God provided a helper who was meet for him. The word "meet" means suitable. God was saying, I will make Adam a helper who is suitable for him.

**GEN 2:19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of**



**the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.**

We are not looking now at a different author telling about the same events as were recorded in chapter one. We are being given a more detailed explanation of the creation of woman. That had not been done in chapter one. As God had created Adam from the dust of the earth, so he brought various animals into existence. Each was brought to Adam for naming. Here is further evidence that the kinds of Genesis one were not the species of today. It would have been relatively simple for Adam to have given names to a few major classes of animals. It would have been something else for him to give names to every pink salamander and three toed sloth.

**GEN 2:20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.**

Among all of the animals brought before Adam, there was not a single one suited perfectly to his needs, and capable of populating the earth with his kind.

**Gen 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;**

In order to bring about the existence of a help suitable for Adam, God caused him to go into a deep sleep. While in this anesthetized condition, God took one of Adam's ribs and removed it from him.



**GEN 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.**

From that rib, God made a helper for Adam. We must now go to the New Testament for a reference to this event. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:11-13 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. In 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 Paul added, For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

**GEN 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.**

Someone has said this is proof that love at first sight is possible. Adam saw this woman God had prepared for him and immediately fell head over heels in love with her. Maybe so. But there is another consideration. His choice was quite limited!!

It is interesting that the Hebrew words for man and woman show a similar sound relationship. The Hebrew words are ish and ishsha. The English word woman results from the fact that woman is a womb-man, or a man with a womb.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul said a man should love his wife as he would his own flesh. In 1 Cor. 15 it is said there are many kinds of flesh. There is the flesh of fish and the flesh of fowls, etc. Adam said, this is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones. None of the animals met that qualification.





**GEN 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

Every young man should have a natural affection for his parents. They have usually sacrificed much to nourish and guide him to adulthood. Still, there comes a time in which most young men will find it natural to cut the apron strings and form a new and different relationship with a wife. In a very special way, he will become one with his new wife. He will care for her. He will depend upon her. He will confide in her. In many cases they become one to the extent that they think alike and look more alike than when the met. It is God's intention that when such a union takes place, both the man and the woman will walk hand in hand, with every step leading in the direction of the pearly gates of the city wherein dwells righteousness.

Too many young men and women enter into marriage without truly becoming one to the extent that God expects. If the proper attitude toward one's husband or wife existed, the divorce rate would dwindle to practically nothing.

**GEN 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**

The temperature in the garden must have been very mild in nature. One does not move around unclothed in extreme temperatures. Such mild temperatures might help explain the long life spans of Adam, Noah, Methusaleh, etc.

Shame was unknown. Today there are those who claim our shame over nudity is artificial and that we would do well to discard such moral codes. May I suggest



that shame over nudity could be a strong evidence of the reality of the events of the garden. At the point of the creation of man and woman, they were naked but unashamed. From that time to this, even among nudists, there is a realization that a strong current of shame runs deep in the minds of men.

## *Chapter 3*

**GEN 3:1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

At this point everything was very good. How then did subtlety enter the picture? Why did God create a serpent that could rebel against him? Was the serpent the same type of animal that we call by that name today?

These questions are intertwined. Subtlety entered the picture because the serpent had the freedom to choose his own path of action. While attending an advanced Bible class at college, I heard one of the brighter students asked the instructor a question of this type. The instructor answered that we have no measuring stick with which to evaluate the actions of the omniscient God. Our minds are finite. His is infinite. He is my Judge. I am not his.

As a partial answer, God appears to desire the company of other spiritual beings who have a degree of power and wisdom. Therefore, he created both angels and humans. God surely would not create another God with both infinite wisdom and power. Since every creature has limitations, each is subject to error unless regulated by the guidance of God himself. The serpent clearly made the mistake of departing from the instructions of his Maker and setting out on his own. Man all too often does the same thing.

The serpent was definitely not the same type of animal that we presently call a serpent. Snakes are among the most dim witted of the animal kingdom. This creature was more intelligent than any beast of the field. Later, we find that it stood upright. We probably do not have

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any way of visualizing the true nature of this creature. Revelation 12:9 draws a connection between four terms. Those terms are: Satan, the Great Dragon, the Serpent and the Devil. There is reason to believe the Serpent of Revelation is identical with the Serpent of Genesis 3.

But, was this creature itself the Devil, or did the Devil simply take advantage of it to accomplish his purposes. You will perhaps recall that Jesus spoke to Peter once and said, "Get thee behind me Satan." I refer the reader to remarks made by Adam Clarke in his commentary. He suggested that the animal may have been one with mental powers superior to even the great apes; one having the power of speech. We are left to wonder. Part of the answer is obvious. It was not a snake, as we know snakes.

This creature spoke to Eve and began to plant a seed of rebellion in her mind. He reminded her that God had given her a restriction. She was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had made that law unmistakable.

I want to make a very important point here. God does not make laws for the sake of being a dictator. He makes laws for the welfare of his creatures. He knows the universe he has created. He knows how to live within that universe. We are headed for disaster when we ignore his commands.

GEN 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Dear reader. I am convinced there is a difference in the makeup of men and women. Eve was created as a helper

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for Adam. She was more susceptible to suggestion than Adam. It is still true. The Serpent knew full well which of the two to approach first.

Eve informed the Serpent of that which he already knew as well as she did. God had encouraged she and her husband to eat of every tree of the garden. They had been placed there for their welfare.

**GEN 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.**

There was only one tree which they were to avoid. It grew in the very midst of the garden. It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not even to touch the tree, say nothing of eating from its fruit.

Eating the fruit from the forbidden tree would result in death. God had said that in the day they ate of that tree they would surely die.

We have another question now. Why did God forbid Adam and Eve the eating of the fruit of that particular tree? May I suggest that God knew humanity, with its limited experience and logical powers, would not be capable of digesting the fruit of that tree. The definition of ultimate good and evil is the privilege of God, not man. God had reserved that tree for himself. The day man decided to determine good and evil for himself, he would be marching toward destruction. The indigestion caused by eating from that tree would be fatal. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12).

**GEN 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:**

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Eve should have been jolted into reality by this statement. The Serpent is calling God a deliberate liar. God had said, You shall die. Satan disputed the word of God and said, You shall not surely die. What a tremendous difference one word can make. Satan was persuading the woman she and Adam could take a chance. There were two paths of action. Each had its attractions. Satan was urging Eve to take the gamble. Would her curiosity overcome her loyalty to God?

GEN 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

The Serpent suggested that God's motives were highly suspect. The only reason he had forbidden this fruit was that he was jealous of his superior position. If Eve would just eat of the fruit of the tree, she would be able to free herself of her lowly position of obedience and step up to equality with her Creator.

I find the approach taken by Satan very revealing. If one compares Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 with the present passage, it seems very likely that Satan at one time held a responsible position before God. If I am correct, Satan stepped up to make himself equal with God and persuaded a host of the angels to rebel along with him. In that case, pride and lust for power had been the key to his downfall. It would be highly logical for him to decide Eve would follow the same path he had taken.

I realize the two passages in Ezekiel and Isaiah are addressed directly to rulers of the earth. Yet, I believe these earthly rulers were influenced by Satan, just as Peter was told, Get thee behind me Satan."



In addition to the references mentioned above, it would be wise for the reader to consider Jesus statement in Luke 10:18 that he saw Satan fall from heaven, Jesus statement in Matthew 12:29 about the binding of the strong man before entering into his house and also the rejection of Satan from heaven as recorded in the twelfth chapter of Revelation.

GEN 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Satan is called the Prince of this world. He has shown much skill in governing it. Among his influences are the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. He approached Eve with the same three temptations he used later in his attempt to defile Jesus Christ. First he appealed to her pride of life by telling her she could be equal to god. Then he used the lust of the eye and caused her to see the attractiveness of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Finally, he caused her to believe the taste of this fruit must be most delightful.

Eve fell. Not only did she fall; she had a strong enough influence on Adam that he followed her example. Many of us underestimate the influence of a woman upon her husband. Normally one will find a strong woman encouraging and inspiring a strong Christian man. Very often a weak and selfish woman will destroy her husband, both with respect to this world as well as his hope in the world to come.

I do not wish to excuse Adam for his part in this



fatal disregard of God's commands. He did not have to follow his wife. His responsibility was to supervise her and guide her away from just the type of weakness she demonstrated. He did not do that.

I have heard it said that we do not know just how long Adam and Eve were in the garden before this event took place. Some have suggested thousands of years. This cannot be true. It is quite clear that no children had been born before the curse was placed upon woman that she would bear children in sorrow. According to Gen. 5:3, Adam was 130 years of age when Seth was born. This was after they were driven from the Garden. Therefore, Adam and Eve were not in the Garden of Eden for more than one hundred and thirty years.

GEN 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

The eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil produced very significant changes. Suddenly both of them realized they were naked. They were ashamed of their nakedness and sought a way to cover themselves. From that day to our own, men and women of every nation and tribe have had some degree of modesty. The little children may go about completely nude. However, after reaching the age of puberty, some type of clothing is normally used to cover the genital area of the body. I am convinced this is more than just a recognition of protection of that area and of health risks. I believe man's sense of shame over nakedness reaches back all the way to the sin of Adam and Eve.

I would add that the shame Adam and Eve felt over their physical nakedness was only part of the picture. They now had the guilt of sin upon their souls. There was a need to hide the nakedness of their souls from the all-seeing eye of God.



They were not very adept at making clothing. They tried to clothe themselves by using the leaves of the fig tree. Later, God would teach them a better way.

GEN 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

They had been blessed by the direct presence of God when first placed in the garden. Apparently, it was a common occurrence for God to visit them. During the cool of the day, God was moving through the garden. Due to their guilty consciences, they sought to hide themselves from him. This is absolutely impossible. Neither trees nor caves, neither night nor day, neither time nor distance, can hide men from God. See Psalm 139:7-11). Dear friend, you may hide your sins from men. You cannot hide them from God.

GEN 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

God did not have to hear the voice of Adam to know his location. The question was asked to bring a response from Adam, not to locate him. I recall the day I was angry at my mother for having been punished. My punishment was just, but I was angry anyway. I hid in a fruit cellar which had been dug beneath the house. When it became dark, my mother came outside and began to call for me. I stayed quiet for a while. Then my love for my mother overcame my anger and I answered her. God knew this would happen to Adam.



GEN 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

At least Adam had the good sense to tell God why he had hid himself. But I must inject another thought right here. Adam and Eve had been naked before they ate the fruit. Why had they not been ashamed of their nakedness before they ate the fruit? It seems that it was not wrong to be naked before they ate the fruit. It became wrong at that time, and has been wrong ever since.

GEN 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

God then asked how Adam had come to the realization that he was naked, and that his nakedness was wrong. Had Adam eaten of the forbidden tree? The eating of that fruit had caused him to feel shame at his nakedness. I suggest to you that the fruit of this tree was not compatible with the digestive abilities of man. God is the only one who has the right to legislate good and evil. Man can see immediate relationships and consequences of his actions. However, only God can see all the consequences of every action until the end of time. Man may make traffic laws. He may make laws about a variety of things. But, when it comes to the determination of the very nature of what is good and what is evil, only God can digest such fruit. When God makes laws, man walks straight toward destruction when he ignores them!

GEN 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.



Adam was right. Eve had given him the fruit. Still, he did not have to eat it. Adam was passing the buck in two directions. He was attempting to excuse himself by placing the blame on Eve. That was not a sufficient. He went even farther. He accused God of bring this about. If God had not given him such a woman as a helper, he would not have fallen. Thus, it was God's fault. This is a very common excuse among men. If God had not made me with a weakness for tobacco or alcohol or gambling or homosexuality, I would not act the way I have. My friend, God did not make you a sinner.

GEN 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Having heard Adam's flimsy defense, God then turned to the woman whom Adam had accused of bringing about his sad condition. What had she done? Note that God did not ask Eve why she had done it. Her admission of what she had done was accompanied by her excuse. She knew it was wrong. Surely it was not her fault!

The Serpent was the culprit. It was he who deserved punishment, not her. Her claim was that not only had the serpent caused her to fall. He had used trickery to do it. He had beguiled her. Guile is deceit and fraud. Eve could not lay the blame on Adam. She had encouraged him to sin. Her defense had to go back to the Serpent. It was true that the Serpent had lied to her. He had said she would not surely die. In spite of that, she could have resisted him and remained true to the commandments of her Maker.

I wonder how many thousands of men and women have repeated the feeble excuse of Eve. "The Devil made



me do it.” God has given us a way of escape from every temptation. No temptation has ever come upon men so great that they were unable to bear it with the strength of God to uphold them. Christ demonstrated this truth when he withstood the temptations of Satan at the beginning of his ministry.

GEN 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

There was a complete chain of guilt. Adam sinned. Eve sinned. The serpent sinned. God had faced both Adam and Eve with their guilt. Then he turned to the Serpent. He did not ask the Serpent if he had sinned. He did not ask him what he had done. He did not ask him why he had done it. God knew precisely what he had done and why he had done it. The only thing necessary was to pronounce a punishment.

The punishment of the Serpent was to be brought lower than either the tame animals or the wild ones.. The cattle are the tame livestock. The beasts of the field are the wild ones. Every one of them would have more respect than the Serpent after the punishment was enacted. This leaves us with considerable doubt that Adam Clarke was correct when he suggested the serpent was some member of the great ape family. These animals are respected as being among the more intelligent and capable specimens of the animal kingdom. The Serpent seems to have been brought lower than that.



GEN 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Who is the woman? Who is her seed? Who is the Serpent? Who is his seed? These are tough questions because we are dealing with two levels. There is the fleshly level and the spiritual level. It is not as important that we know the species of animal which was more subtil than any beast of the field as it is that we recognize the identity of Satan who was working through that creature. It is far more important that we recognize the Seed of the woman who bruised the head of the Serpent that to think of the fleshly children of women.

It is a common thing to point out the horror of most women when they come unexpectedly upon a snake, and to recognize the danger of the deadly venom of poisonous snakes when humans are bitten.

I do not propose to be capable of identifying the fleshly creature who was seen by Eve in the garden. Nor am I able to point to any animal living today and say this animal is a descendant of the one who actually spoke with Eve.

I am certain of the identity of the seed of the woman who bruised the head of Satan. That seed is Jesus Christ. This verse is a prophecy of the victory of Christ over Satan through his sacrifice upon the cross. Combining the third chapter of Galatians with chapter 4 and verse 4 of that same book is convincing proof that Jesus Christ is the seed of the woman. Joseph was not the true father of Jesus. The Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and Jesus was conceived. Jesus had no earthly father. He was the seed of woman. Galatians 4:4 tells us he was brought forth of a woman.



The enmity which exists between Satan and the woman is the continual war which is fought between humanity and Satan. That enmity will go on until Christ has defeated Satan and all of his seed.

GEN 3:16 **Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.**

There is not way for us to know what the original conditions of reproduction were. It does seem to appear that there were similarities to the sexual unions of today. God made them male and female. But there must have been a great difference in the birthing process. Today nearly every woman looks with anxiety upon the pain which she must endure when her baby is born. We hear records of certain women bearing children and then returning to work in the fields within the next twenty-four hours. These are certainly exceptions. This distress does not seem to have been inevitable from the beginning.

Almost every serious student of the Bible has wondered if there was some connection between sex and the eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. After all, God did associate the curse of the woman with sex. There may be another angle from which to view this association. God does say that marriage is honorable and that the bed is undefiled.

It is possible that the pain women endure when life is brought into this world is a reminder of the seriousness of the woman's sin when death entered the world in the garden. ~~It grieved God when death entered the~~

world. Every woman experiences grief when a new life begins.

GEN 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Adam was not supposed to be taking orders from Eve. He had been appointed as leader. She was to be a help meet for him. Because he had shirked his responsibility and allowed her to manipulate him, he would forfeit the right to eat of that tree. The punishment would also extend all the fruit of the ground. No longer would man be able to simply reach out and eat that which grew without difficulty. There would be many obstacles to self preservation.

GEN 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

Many farmers would like to dream of crops that had no weeds. I can remember many days in which we dealt with hay that was filled with thistles. It was not pleasant. Thorns and thistles are merely terms which represent all of the unpleasant problems associated with the cultivating of crops.

I am intrigued with the statement about eating the herbs of the field. In the first chapter of Genesis we are told God created three types of vegetation: trees, herbs and grass. In the second chapter Adam and Eve were told they could eat from the trees. It did not mention the herbs. Now, in this third chapter it appear that man began to eat the herbs as a part of the punishment for eating of the forbidden tree. Perhaps it is more difficult



to collect food from the herbs than to gather it from trees. I do think there is some unpleasant significance to the change from trees to herbs.

GEN 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Previous to this placing of the curse upon the ground the production and gathering of food was not hard labor. After the ground was cursed, man has found it necessary to produce food by sweat and hard work.

At this point, God pronounced the sentence of death upon the first couple. He had created them from the dust of the earth. Now they would go back to the earth from which they had come. The bodies of men were capable of living forever as long as they had access to the tree of life. As soon as they no longer had access to that tree, they would be faced with physical death. The body would ultimately turn back to dust.

I once took a group of junior high school children to visit Montgomery Bell State Park in Tennessee. There was a small graveyard in the park. As youngsters will do, a couple of the boys ran ahead. They decided to look into one of the graves which had been there for decades. They had the cover off when I arrived and we were able to see into the grave. There was nothing there but dirt. I chastised them for opening the grave and we went on our way.

Are you concerned about the resurrection. How can God resurrect a body which has returned to the dust from which it came? Read the 15th chapter of I Corinthians for God's own answer to that question. The body which is raised will be as different from the one which was



planted in the grave as a kernel of wheat is different from the wheat plant which grows from it.

Regardless of all this, sin had entered the world, and death through sin. Satan was beginning to pay his wages. He has never ceased unto this day.

GEN 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

Every man on earth is related to every other man. We are all related through both the first couple, and also through Noah and his wife. Eve is the mother of us all.

Motherhood is a blessed privilege. A woman who brings forth a child through an honorable marriage has a right to be proud. Sometimes men look with disdain upon a woman who has never entered into the business world. That is a mistake. The first priority of existence for a woman is to go to heaven. The second is to help her husband to go there. The third is to raise her children in such manner that they will go there.

GEN 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

The fig leaves Adam and Eve had made were not sufficient. God provided them with clothes made from the skins of animals. The first reaction to this is a conception in our mind similar to that of many artists who show Adam and Eve with crude appearing loin cloths and leopard spotted designs. There is no reason God could not have made very nice looking leather garments like our suede vests and alligator shoes. We sometimes think we know far more than we do.

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**GEN 3:22** And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

How had man become like the members of the Godhead? He had dabbled in areas where he had no business. He had tried to direct his own steps. He had found the way that seemeth right but which actually ends in death. For man's own protection, it now became necessary to separate him from the tree of life. The body which had been corrupted by sin must now be allowed to descend into the grave and once again become dust. To be corruptible and to also live forever would be a hideous condition.

**GEN 3:23** Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

There were at least two reasons man was driven from the garden. First, he could not be allowed in the direct presence of God in his sinful state. Second, he had to be separated from the tree of life so his body which was subject to corruption would not live forever. He would now be forced to labor and sweat to bring forth crops that were interlaced with thorns and thistles. This condition would continue until the time described in Revelation when it is said, "There was no more curse." The reader should study the eighth chapter of Romans carefully in connection with this matter of the corruption of both man and the rest of creation.

**GEN 3:24** So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims,



**and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.**

What a sad day. For some six thousand years man has lived under the curse which began in Eden. Nor has man ever been able to eat from the tree of life. God has seen fit to guard the entrance of the garden with angelic beings who are perfectly capable of preventing human entrance.

There is hope. The book of Revelation informs us the tree of life will again be available to man in the New Heaven and the New Earth. There, the tree of life grows beside the river of life. The fruit of the tree can be found in every season. The leaves are for the healing of the nations.

There is more here than finite human minds can handle. Let us hear God, believe him, obey him, and live in hope. Someday the curse will be lifted. The tree of life is waiting.

## *Chapter 4*

**GEN 4:1      And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.**

At this point God's method of bringing human's into existence changed. In the case of both Adam and Eve he had taken the dust of the ground, formed it into the desired condition and then breathed life into it. Now procreation is to be through sexual intercourse. There is a closeness between male and female within that act which can best be described as "knowledge" of the sexual partner. Such knowledge should be restricted to the marriage relationship. It can produce a bond which is capable of cementing the marriage so tightly that it is not easily broken. No man ought to "know" his neighbor's wife.

Eve is known as the "mother of the living." She was proud of her role in the continuation of the life God had begun with Adam and herself. It is a natural attitude for a woman to desire childbearing. She knows this is a privilege of the highest order. The proper bearing and rearing of children should be honored by all. Secretaries and female business executives may convince themselves they are fulfilling their lives, but the highest satisfaction a woman can have is in "getting a man" from the Lord.

**GEN 4:2      And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.**

A second son now joined the first. As is the case in many families, the two sons developed different skills. It is wise to recognize the different talents of children.

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Neither Cain nor Abel had any right to look down upon the occupation of the other. Both of these activities were honorable and upright.

GEN 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

We do not know how long it was between the time of their birth and the time of this sacrifice to God. Obviously both of the men were grown to adulthood.

Each brought the products of his own labor to offer to the Lord. Cain was a tiller of the ground and it seemed natural for him to bring some of his produce for an offering. We ought also to note that God had given plant life for human consumption and had said nothing about the eating of meat at this time and had commanded man to maintain a vegetarian diet until after the flood in the time of Noah. In first three verses of the ninth chapter of Genesis we read; And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

This might lead one to think that Cain felt his sacrifice was more suitable than was that of Abel. After all, it was from his own food. Cain's was only from the animals that provided wool for clothing. That might hold water except for what is said in the book of Hebrews. We are told there that Cain's offering was made "by faith." Now faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Thus, it appears that God had given instructions to



offer animal sacrifices rather than vegetable sacrifices.

We are told in Proverb 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he will direct thy paths. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

GEN 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

Abel also brought from the produce which he obtained from his labors. But this time the sacrifice was in accordance with the will of God. It is not likely that either Cain or Abel had the faintest idea that God's requirement of a lamb sacrifice would mean as much as it later meant in the death of the Lamb of God upon the cross.

As might be expected, God was pleased with the sacrifice of Abel. It was according to his instructions.

GEN 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

This is not respect of persons with God. He did not arbitrarily say to himself, "I like Abel better than I do Cain. Therefore I will accept his sacrifice and reject that of Cain. God had given instructions. Abel obeyed them. Cain did not.

Cain became angry because of the rejection of his sacrifice. That is not unlike what would happen today if God were to call us to account for our transgressions. There are multiplied millions of persons who worship God according to their own set of rules, and not by those of the Creator. In spite of their negligence in following

God's will, they will rise up in anger if their error is pointed out.

GEN 4:6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

Cain had no right to be angry with God. He need not go around with a long face because of his chastisement.

GEN 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

If Cain's sacrifice had been offered in the manner God intended all would have been well. Since he did not, he would have to meet the consequences head on. Sin had waited to entrap him. It had succeeded and had gained control of him. Sin always seeks out the hearts of men and tries to rule over them. Men should have the spiritual strength to reject the overtures of sin and take control of it.

Have you noted that these are the same words God used to tell the woman she would be subject to her husband. He told Eve her desire would be to her husband and he would rule over her. Do you see the similarity in the two situations?

GEN 4:8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

We do not know what Cain talked about with Abel his
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brother; but we can form a pretty accurate guess. "What was so great about your sacrifice that God accepted it and turned away from mine." When the time was ripe and they were alone together in the field, Cain's anger turned into action. Thoughts are followed by words. Then words are followed by actions. It is the old, pattern which is repeated again and again.

**GEN 4:9      And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?**

God knew exactly where Abel was. He did not have to ask. The reason for asking was that Cain's guilt could be completely and fully exposed. Cain evaded an answer. Did God expect him to forever keep an eye on his brother? In a very real sense Cain was his brother's keeper. He should have rejoiced in Abel's righteousness and followed in his tracks. He should have loved him and desired nothing but good for him. Instead, he had murdered him.

We are our brother's keeper. Every man on earth is our brother through Adam and Eve. We should grieve when they are in danger and be happy when all is well with them. We should do our best to see that things do go well with them. This may mean feeding them. It may mean correcting them. It may mean lifting them up when they are down. It never means destroying them as Cain did.

**GEN 4:10      And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.**

The question God now asks indicates the terrible seriousness of Cain's actions. Far from marking the



end of his relationship with his brother, the guilt of the murder would be upon his soul far into the future. Sin cannot be hid from the eyes of he who made us. The only way to cover sin is with loving actions. “Love covereth a multitude of sins.”

**GEN 4:11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand;**

A terrible curse was placed upon Cain. The earth itself, which had drunk in the blood of his brother Abel, would provide a proper punishment for the murderer.

**GEN 4:12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.**

Cain would no longer be able to reap a harvest from the crops he sowed. He would sow in vain. The condition would be so serious Cain would find himself wandering from place to place as he was pursued by others. He would have no place to call his home. As he had persecuted Cain, so he would be persecuted without rest.

**GEN 4:13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.**

Only now does Cain realize the endless consequences of his sin. He is convinced that he is not strong enough to stand up under the punishment which God has measured out to him. He should have considered such things before his wrath overcame his good judgment.

**GEN 4:14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy**

**face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.**

Cain was convinced that he would not only be rejected by the earth upon which he had depended for his living, he would be separated from the face of God. When God turns his head the other way a man is in desperate condition. He is at the mercy of any enemy who might wish to prey upon him. Cain had his situation analyzed pretty well.

**GEN 4:15      And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.**

Men have labored in vain to discover just what the mark was that God placed upon Cain. They have attempted to identify the mark of Cain with entire races who seem to have suffered much persecution. It is entirely possible that the mark was limited to Cain as an individual rather than being extended to those who descended from him.

**GEN 4:16      And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.**

This verse is not proof that one can escape from the presence of the Lord to the extent that God does not know his whereabouts or care about his behavior. From the highest heaven to the deepest part of the sea, God's all seeing eye takes note of all men.

I do not propose to locate the land of Nod. One of the four rivers mentioned as borders of Eden was the

Euphrates. That is about the best I can do in setting the location of Nod. Even then we must recognize that the flood of Noah may have completely reshaped the boundaries of territories until such speculation is filled with guesswork.

**GEN 4:17      And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.**

If Adam and Eve were the ancestors of every man and woman on earth we must not have a complete list of all of their children. We are told of Cain and Abel. After the death of Abel, Eve gave birth to another son named Seth. We are not told of any daughters born to Adam and Eve. According to the record, Eve was the only woman alive at that time. Thus it seems likely that Adam and Eve had another child who was a daughter, and that Cain married his own sister. We are not told the name of his wife, or are we given any details whatsoever.

Is it possible to build a city with a population of Adam and Eve, Cain and his wife, and a child called Enoch? I take it that the city of Enoch referred to the buildings and walls of the city rather than a sizable population which dwelt in a certain location.

**GEN 4:18      And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.**

If the city did not have a large population at the beginning, it most certainly could have had after a number of years. Listing the generations up to Lamech we have Adam, Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Mehujael,

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Methusael and Lamech. After eight generations who each lived as long as these men did, a vast number of persons could have come into existence.

GEN 4:19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

Here is the first record of polygamy. It may not have been the first case. It was not intended in the beginning. God made one woman for one man. The two became one flesh. God said a man was to leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife. The word is not in the plural. He was expected to have but one wife.

Just as a man cannot serve two masters, a man will stare disaster in the eye when he attempts to live with two women at the same time. God has allowed it at times. He has never condoned it. Multiple wives and concubines spell trouble.

GEN 4:20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

Jabal and Jubal sound like twins. Their differing choices of occupation do not sound like it. Jabal was an animal husbandman. He no doubt enjoyed the fresh outdoors and the sounds of the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep and of the goats.

GEN 4:21 And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

In contrast Jubal was a musician. Do you not suppose each of the two sons of Adah had a difficult time

understanding what attraction his brother's occupation had for him? If men and women could only realize the importance of varying interests in life. We need herdsmen. We also need musicians. Each has something constructive to offer society. Music lifts the soul. Farming feeds the body. Let us give credit where credit is due.

GEN 4:22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

We find yet another occupation represented by the son of Lamech's other wife Zillah. This time it is that of the artisan of metal crafting. This craft was extremely important then, and is still so today. Sometimes the work is ornamental. Other times it results in tools or furniture. The importance of these last two verses seems to be in identification of the origins of a variety of occupations. Genesis is the book of beginnings.

GEN 4:23 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

This verse is in poetic form in the original. It may have been a song. It is difficult to tell whether Lamech is saying he expects to be chastened severely because he has slain another man, or whether he has slain another man in vengeance because someone has hurt him in some way.

GEN 4:24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

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If Lamech is saying he will take vengeance seven times as severe as God visited upon Cain he has a wrong attitude. "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay."

If Lamech is saying he expects to be chastised severely for having slain a man, then he is anticipating a terrible future. Cain's punishment was "more than he could bear." Lamech's would be ten times that much.

**GEN 4:25      And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.**

Eve was to receive another son from the Lord to take the place of Abel who had been murdered. The grieving mother had at least a partial recompense for the agony caused by Cain's folly.

**GEN 4:26      And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.**

Through the line of Seth we see men beginning to call upon the name of Jehovah. We would hardly expect the descendants of Cain to be god fearing if they followed in the footsteps of their infamous father. There are two lines of human behavior. The wicked and the righteous. The wicked mock at those who call upon the name of the Lord. The righteous are appalled at the attitude of those who live in mockery.



## Chapter 5

**GEN 5:1            This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;**

The book of Genesis is a book of origins. Men have struggled to find the date of their beginning. Your present author heard some of the most famous evolutionists of their time discussing just such matters at the University of Chicago on the one hundredth anniversary of Darwin's publication of "Origin of Species." They had widely differing opinions on the age of man. About the only thing upon which they completely agreed was that man has existed upon earth for millions of years. This chapter of Genesis gives God's record of the "Origin of Species."

Man was created in the image of God. Just what does it mean to be created in the image of God? I do not agree with those who say man differs from the animals in that he has the power of reason. There are many of the higher animals that are able to reason. The matter is deeper than that. Man is capable of understanding the difference between right and wrong. An animal can observe that certain acts bring immediate pleasure. It eats food to fill its stomach. It avoids its enemies to keep from being eaten. But animals are not capable of grasping eternal consequences of bringing their lives into harmony with spiritual law. Man can do that. Man is conscious, as God is. Man has the ability to choose, as God does. The animals possess both of these characteristics. But, in addition, man can conceive of eternal reward and eternal punishment, based on his choices as he exercises his free will. I will enjoy eternal life with God, or I will agonize forever over having separated myself from God and having earned the wages of sin which is the death of the soul.

**GEN 5:2            Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.**

We are not told why God chose to create humans in such manner that procreation takes place through the uniting of male and female. Note that God called their name Adam. The word adam means man. Eve is included. The verse speak of “the day” in which they were created. Sometimes we use this phrase to mean an extended period of time. But in this case this is not true. The days of Genesis had a morning and an evening, a light part and a dark part. They were not eras of time. Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day of creation.

The Lord made provision for every need of his newly created pair. They had each other for companionship. If they chose to do so, they could call upon him for other needs which arose.

**GEN 5:3            And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth:**

I believe there is no way around accepting the chronology of this chapter of the Bible and still accepting the holy book as divinely inspired. It could not be made clearer that these dates were given that we might observe long periods of life, followed by death. Adam lived one hundred and thirty years. I am happy to accept that figure as it stands.

After living for this extended period of time, Adam begat a son who was like him. I do not suppose this





means his eyes were the same color, or that he was the same number of inches tall. God had made Adam after his own likeness. Now Adam produced a son who was also in God's image. Man did not produce animal progeny.

Seth would replace Abel, whom Cain slew. Seth is mentioned here in particular because it is through him that the line produced the Saviour of the world.

**GEN 5:4      And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:**

One has to wonder at the difference in the life spans of these pre-flood men when compared with the twenty years or so that men live today before producing their children. What is the reason for the tremendous decrease in life spans? It may be that sin began to take its toll on the health of mankind. A very sharp change took place at the time of the flood. After the flood, the life spans of men dropped to about one hundred twenty years.

**GEN 5:5      And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.**

When one adds the years before the birth of Seth to the years after that birth, we have the total of nine hundred thirty. Now we have the blow of the hammer. "And he died." That is what God had said would happen. It did not happen the minute he ate of the fruit of the



tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It did happen! In one sense Adam died in the day he ate from that tree. He was separated from the presence of God. In another sense, he died when his spirit left his body, hundreds of years later.

**GEN 5:6            And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos:**

Seth also lived an enormous number of years before producing a son.

**GEN 5:7            And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:**

This time we are told there was a multiplicity of children, both sons and daughters. We now have two lines of persons. There are the descendants of Cain, and there are the descendants of Seth. This may well be important just a bit later.

**GEN 5:8            And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.**

Seth also died. He was not guilty of the sin of Adam. He did not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yet, he suffered from the consequences of Adam's sin. He was outside the Garden of Eden because his father had been driven from it.

All men today die as a consequence of Adam's sin. The New Testament tells us that as in Adam all die, so in Christ are all men made alive.



**GEN 5:9**            **And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:**

Enos is the third generation. Cainan is the fourth.

**GEN 5:10**           **And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:**

We have no idea what the population of the earth was by this time. We are examining only the line of Seth. Some of the grandchildren of these men may have been producing children before their death. We do not know how many sons and daughters they produced.

**GEN 5:11**           **And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.**

I will have no further comment for a few verses, except to notice that each man finally died. The curse was continuing.

**GEN 5:12**           **And Cainan lived seventy years and begat Mahalaleel:**

**GEN 5:13**           **And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:**

**GEN 5:14**           **And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.**

**GEN 5:15**           **And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:**

**GEN 5:16**           **And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:**

**GEN 5:17**           **And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.**



**GEN 5:18** And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch:

**GEN 5:19** And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

**GEN 5:20** And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

**GEN 5:21** And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:

**GEN 5:22** And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

**GEN 5:23** And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

**GEN 5:24** And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

We have arrived at the seventh generation from Adam. There are two important facts associated with this man. The rest of these men died. Enoch did not die. He lived a very holy life and is said to have walked with God. As a consequence, God allowed him to bypass death.

The second fact is that Enoch was a prophet. Jude 1:14 informs us that he foretold the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his saints.

**GEN 5:25** And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech.

**GEN 5:26** And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:

**GEN 5:27** And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

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If ever a man lived longer than Methuselah we have no record of it. In our own day we hear of persons living well over one hundred years and we are amazed. Here is a man who lived over ten times the three score and seven years mentioned Psalm 90:10.

But, he died!

GEN 5:28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:

GEN 5:29 And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.

Noah was the grandson of Methuselah. Noah's name means "rest." Lamech must have thought that in some manner, his son Noah would bring relief from the work and toil which had been come upon man because of Adam's sin. I have not found a satisfying explanation of the manner in which Noah provided rest. It may be that the statement in Genesis 8:21 that God would not curse the ground any more for man's sake has something to do with it. But man still labors by the sweat of his brow and has to contend with thorns and thistles. I will frankly admit that I do not have a complete answer to the difficulty here.

GEN 5:30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters:

GEN 5:31 And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.

GEN 5:32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

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The arithmetic indicates that Adam lived to see his great, great, great, great, great, great grandson, whose name was Lamech. Adam died seven hundred twenty-six years before the flood.

It is wise to include a brief chart here to determine the age of the earth at the time of the flood. See next page.

Time from Creation until the Flood.

|                                              |       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Adam lived 130 years and begat Seth          |       |
| 130 years                                    |       |
| Seth lived 105 years and begat Enos          |       |
| 105 years                                    |       |
| Enos lived 90 years and began Cainan         |       |
| 90 years                                     |       |
| Cainan lived 70 years and begat Mahalaleel   |       |
| 70 years                                     |       |
| Malaleleel lived 65 years and begat Jared    |       |
| 65 years                                     |       |
| Jared lived 162 years and begat Enoch        |       |
| 162 years                                    |       |
| Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methusaleh    |       |
| 65 years                                     |       |
| Methusaleh lived 187 years and begat Lamech  |       |
| 187 years                                    |       |
| Lamech lived 182 years and begat Noah        |       |
| 182 years                                    |       |
| The flood occurred in the 600th year of Noah | _____ |
| <u>600 years</u>                             |       |
| Total number of years before the flood       |       |
| 1656 years                                   |       |



I prefer to accept this number rather than the millions of years suggested by the evolutionists of the twentieth century.

## *Chapter 6*

**GEN 6:1**            **And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,**

This is an interesting verse. Why does it not say sons and daughters were born to men when they began to multiply on the face of the earth? Only daughters are mentioned. This has led some to suggest that there was marriage between humans and some type of angelic beings. I think this is not the case. It does not say there were no sons born to them.

**GEN 6:2**            **That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.**

It is much more likely that the sons of God were those of the line of Seth who called upon the name of the Lord, and that the daughters of men were those of the line of Cain who rejected the commandments of Jehovah. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

It is very unwise for those who attempt to follow the instructions of the Lord to become yoked to unbelievers through the marriage bond. All too often the faithful are corrupted rather than the unfaithful being converted.

**GEN 6:3**            **And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.**

The eyes of Jehovah travel to and fro over all the earth. They miss nothing. The population of the world





had become so evil and wicked God knew drastic steps must be taken to preserve a remnant who could be used in his plans for a future family. He would not destroy them without proper warning. That warning would come through the preaching of Noah. It would continue for one hundred and twenty years. After that time man would have no excuse. His fascination with the lust of the flesh and the pride of life would cause nearly total annihilation.

**GEN 6:4            There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.**

We do not know whether these were physical giants, or whether they were men of gigantic power and influence. There are many ways in which men may dominate other men. Whatever the case, those who had been faithful to the Father in heaven saw fit to unite with them and bare children through these unions. The results were devastating.

**GEN 6:5            And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

We are spared all the horrible details of their wickedness. We can probably begin to understand when we pick up the morning newspaper and read of the hideous things taking place in our present day world. We do still have a sizable number of persons who attempt to live righteous lives. Apparently in the time God is



describing here there were but eight souls worth saving out of all who were alive.

**GEN 6:6**            **And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.**

God does not repent because he has sinned; nor does he repent because he has made a mistake. God did not grieve because of his own shortcomings. He grieved because those whom he had created in his own image had mutilated that image until it was unrecognizable. Man was created with the power of choice. He abused that power until it brought him to the point of destruction.

**GEN 6:7**            **And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.**

When God repents it simply means he decides to back up and go in another direction. If man was determined to ignore the ways of Jehovah and follow his own ways, he must be eliminated. Even the animal world was to feel the effects of God's anger.

**GEN 6:8**            **But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.**

The only thing that prevented God from totally destroying man and animals from the face of the earth was the existence of Noah and his family. Grace is unmerited favor. Noah was certainly not sinless. Still, he

remained close enough to God that God saw a glimmer of hope for humanity. He would begin again with this tiny remnant.

**GEN 6:9            These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.**

And so we are now told of the continuing line of mankind which arose from the single family. God recognized Noah as a just man, or one who tried to be upright. When he was compared with those around him he was far superior spiritually. He walked with God rather than leaning upon his own understanding. See Prov. 3:5-6.

**GEN 6:10           And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.**

Family of Noah consisted of he and his wife, his three sons and their three wives. There were no others. It is possible that the three major races on earth today take their characteristics from these three sons of Noah. These are the Hamitic, or black race, the Semitic or oriental race and the Caucasian or white race. All others may be variations of these three main lines.

**GEN 6:11           The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.**

When men turn from God's directions and follow their own understanding many serious consequences arise. Among these are famine, pestilence and war. Violence



may come at several levels. We may have wife beating, tribal conflicts, or even world wars which involve major portions of the entire population of man. Robbery and murder are but two manifestations of this corruption.

**GEN 6:12            And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.**

It is almost as if God had difficulty in telling us just how all encompassing this wickedness was. Over and over he repeats the picture in different words. The words "all flesh" clearly did not include Noah and his family.

**GEN 6:13            And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.**

The Lord prepared Noah for what was ahead. It was explained to Noah that an end of man was to occur. He was ready to cleanse the entire earth. Noah was to have a very special place in this procedure.

**GEN 6:14            Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.**

Noah was to make a vessel large enough to contain all of the animal life God wished to preserve from the coming disaster. This vessel is called an ark. We normally think of a very large vessel when the word ark is mentioned. This was true in the case of Noah's ark. It was not true in the case of the ark which Moses mother wove out of bulrushes, as mentioned in Exodus chapter two.



The ark of Noah was to be made of Gopher wood. This was no doubt a very water resistant type of wood which would withstand the long period of the flood without being rotted out. I find various guesses as to what present day wood it might have resembled. These are but guesses. Noah was to make various compartments in the ark, and he was to use pitch, or tar, to seal it and prevent it from leaking.

**GEN 6:15            And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.**

Noah was given the exact dimensions according to which he was to construct the ark. The ancient cubit was not the same in all countries and in all times. In general it was close to eighteen inches. Using this as a standard, the ark was to be about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. This is a sizable boat. Many who complain that the ark would not have had room to hold all that the scriptures say were put into it might be surprised if they were to see it in person.

**GEN 6:16            A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.**

A small opening was to be made in the top of the ark and a door was to be placed in the side of it. Three stories were to be built. It was not to be just one hollow shell.

Although the illustration has been used over and over



again by preachers speaking from the pulpit, it is still just as true as it ever was. When God told Noah what kind of wood to use to make the ark, he eliminated all other kinds of wood. When he specified three stories, he did not allow a couple of extra ones. The church today is somewhat like the ark. God has given instructions for the construction of the church, for entry into the church and for behavior which will allow one to pass from this sin stained world to the new heaven and earth which he has waiting for those who are true to him.

**GEN 6:17            And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.**

There have been many floods throughout the ages. There will probably be many more. Some of them were, or will be, very extremely destructive. But there has never been, nor will there ever be another flood as destructive as the one in Noah's time. Every animal living, except for those who entered the ark, lost it's life.

Some have been concerned about the welfare of the fish. Were they not included in the "all flesh" that was destroyed? Did Noah make special provision within the ark for the preservation of such forms of life? I do not know the answer to the question. It is thought by certain persons that fish are not composed of flesh. These persons will not eat meat, but they will eat fish to keep their dietary rules. My own feeling is that the fowls of the air and the beasts of the earth were destroyed, but that no "fish pool" was found within the ark.

**GEN 6:18            But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou,**



**and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.**

A covenant is an agreement. It takes two parties to make a covenant. God made a promise to Noah that he would protect this man and his family if they would obey his instructions. God would keep his promise if Noah would follow his instructions. Noah was instructed to move himself and his family into the ark.

I must ask you now, what do you think would have happened if either Noah or any member of his family had refused to honor their part of the covenant. They would have been destroyed. In parallel, God has provided an ark today. We enter into that ark through the waters of baptism. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." What do you think will happen to those who do not enter into that ark of safety?

**GEN 6:19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.**

I am unable to tell you what number of kinds Noah took into the ark. Did he take in tigers, leopards, pumas, lions and housecats? Or are these all variations of some common ancestor? I do trust the validity of the Holy Book. Some people refuse to consider such difficulties. Others take great glee in pointing out the "impossibility" of the biblical record. We need not evade the difficulties. We must not ridicule and scorn the Word of God.

**GEN 6:20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.**



Again I say, "What kind of cattle were these?" Were they Holsteins, Jerseys and Guernseys and Brown Swiss? You see the cattle are set beside the creeping things, as if there were a host of different species of cattle and also many classes of creeping things. There is no man on earth today who can tell us just how many different forms of life Noah took into the ark with him.

**GEN 6:21            And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.**

God could have made it possible for the creatures on the ark to go into a state of suspended animation such that they would not require food for the entire time they were confined. He did not do that. He commanded Noah to gather food for both his family and those creatures. Yes, it would take a very large quantity of food for this large number of animals for the lengthy time they were to remain in the ark. Could God take care of this problem. I think so!

**GEN 6:22            Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.**

Noah did as he was told. He did not ask questions about the type of wood. He did not take it upon himself to alter God's instructions to suit his own logic. It would be a different world today if men were to follow the example of this man's obedience. Not everything Noah did was upright. We will take note of this later. Nevertheless, at this point he is to be commended for following Jehovah's commands to the letter. It was a mark of wisdom on his part. It would be a mark of wisdom for men today.





## *Chapter 7*

**GEN 7:1**            **And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.**

God left no doubt in the mind of Noah as to why he and his family had been selected to replenish the earth. They were the only righteous persons within the entire population of the world. Some today would probably argue with God that this was too severe. Such argument would not have persuaded the Creator. He intended to have a righteous family that might live with him forever. Those left outside the ark would have corrupted everything with which they came into contact.

**GEN 7:2**            **Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.**

At this point God has not revealed to us the criteria for the clean animals. Later he was quite specific about it. The eleventh chapter of Leviticus spells out which of the animals were clean and which were unclean. The unclean animals were not to be used for either human food, or for sacrifice to God.

We must not overlook the use God made of the clean and unclean animals to teach men of the need to preach the gospel to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. It is recorded in the tenth chapter of Acts that Peter was taught this lesson by means of a sheet let down from heaven with both clean and unclean animals in it. God commanded that Peter kill and eat. Peter was

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hesitant and said that he had never eaten that which was unclean. God told him the dividing line had been removed. He could eat that which had previously been unclean. In addition, he could preach to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

The verse in question seems to say there were two of every unclean kind of animals, and there were fourteen of every clean kind. In each case the pairs were to be male and female, just as was true with Noah and his family.

GEN 7:3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

Not only were the beasts of the field taken into the ark, the birds of the heavens were also included. These few would be the seed for the repopulation of the entire earth with a variety of life.

GEN 7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

Noah was one hundred twenty years in building the ark and in preaching to the people to repent of their sins. That time was about up. In one more week the rain would begin and would continue for forty days and nights. We sometimes say it is raining cats and dogs outside. God was getting ready to bring even worse than "cats and dogs." We have never seen such a rain as came upon the world at that time. We can only imagine what it would be like if the heaviest rain we have ever seen were to continue without ceasing for forty days and forty

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nights. God was getting ready to wash away the sin of the world through water.

**GEN 7:5            And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.**

God had chosen well. Noah did exactly what he was told to do, no more, no less. We could use an entire heaven and earth inhabited by people like Noah. God is preparing a new heaven and a new earth. He is going to take the faithful of the ages to be with him eternally. Only those who strive diligently to do all that the Lord commands will be allowed to enter into that new creation.

**GEN 7:6            And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.**

Noah lived six hundred years before the flood struck. He then lived another three hundred and thirty years afterward. There are no six hundred year old men alive today. It is interesting that shortly after the end of the flood, the life spans of humans decreased sharply. We are not told the reason. We can only guess that it had something to do with the changes in the surroundings. It has been suggested that the radiation from space may have increased as a result of decreased water vapor in the atmosphere.

**GEN 7:7            And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.**

The entry into the ark began. Eight humans entered. They were followed by those living things God had commanded Noah to save.



**GEN 7:8            Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,**

We still hear nothing about the fish. The birds and the beasts of the earth are listed, but nothing is said of marine life.

**GEN 7:9            There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.**

What a parade this was! Some children's books intimate the grandeur of the scene by showing two lions, two giraffes, two bears, etc, marching side by side toward the door of the ark. There were one male and one female of the unclean animals, moving in together. There were seven males and seven females of each of the clean animals. Everything took place just as God had specified that it should.

**GEN 7:10           And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.**

God had given a seven day period of time for the ark to be loaded. He waited until that seven days was concluded. Then the rain came. We will see the terrifying extent of the rain in the next few verses.

**GEN 7:11           In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.**

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We are told the precise day upon which the flood began. We will be told the exact day when it ceased. We will not be left wondering just how big the flood was. It was big enough to clean the earth.

Water is found in three different places. It is found above the earth in the atmosphere. It is found flowing or standing upon the surface of the earth. It is found under the surface of the earth. A part of the water of the flood came from above and fell from the atmosphere. In this verse we are also informed that it came to the surface of the ground from the subterranean sources. It would not be surprising to me if the entire surface topography of the earth was radically changed. Mountains may have been broken up and shifted around. Valleys may have been uplifted as the fountains of the deep were released.

GEN 7:12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

As I write these words we have had a very rainy season. For days and days it has either rained or we have been overshadowed by threatening clouds. But when I think of a rain such as that of Noah's time I shudder and wonder what those wicked people who had rebelled against God must have thought as they cursed the continuing downpour and uprising.

GEN 7:13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

GEN 7:14 They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

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**GEN 7:15**      **And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.**

There is little to say in the way of new comment at this point. The only living things in all the world were to be found within the boundaries of that great boat.

**GEN 7:16**      **And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.**

A new thought is presented in this verse. After all the creatures God had decreed should be taken into the ark of safety, God shut them in. When the door was shut those inside were safe. Those outside were doomed. May the reader to all within his or her power to see that when the judgment day arrives and God shuts the door of heaven, they will be on the inside rather than the outside.

**GEN 7:17**      **And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.**

As the rain came down and the water rose, the great ark was lifted off the ground and began to float. We are not told that it had any sails, or any means of locomotion other than the winds that may have blown and carried them in an unpredictable manner.

**GEN 7:18**      **And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.**

**GEN 7:19**      **And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were**



**under the whole heaven, were covered.**

**GEN 7:20      Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.**

First the water rose until the high hills were covered. Then it continued until it was fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains. We should not read this verse to mean the water only rose to a depth of fifteen cubits. That would be approximately twenty-two feet. It would not have been sufficient to cover even small hills. The waters of the flood rose twenty-two feet above the highest mountains on earth. There was nothing to be seen but water and the ark.

**GEN 7:21      And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:**

**GEN 7:22      All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.**

Does this include the fish? It speaks of the dry land. It does not mention the sea.

**GEN 7:23      And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.**

God accomplished that which he set out to do. Every man on earth died with the exception of the eight who were shut into the ark. Every animal died, except for those protected by the walls of the ark.

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**GEN 7:24 And the waters prevailed upon
the earth an hundred and fifty days.**

One hundred and fifty days is the equivalent of six
thirty day months. For one half of one year no land
could be seen.

Chapter 8

GEN 8:1 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;

In one sense it is not surprising that God remembered Noah and the living things that were present with him in the ark. In another sense we might wonder why God did not just forget every living thing and begin the whole process over anew.

Man was not just an afterthought on the part of Jehovah. Man was created in God's own image. He was special in the sight of his Creator. It grieved God when man turned from him and lived in wickedness. It would not have been easy for God to eliminate him completely from the creation. However; we could hardly claim God was unjustified if he had annihilated humanity at this time.

The wind would have aided in the evaporation of the water. The water on the surface of the earth began to lower and the water in the atmosphere no doubt increased.

GEN 8:2 The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

We are not in a position to understand precisely what the condition of the pre-flood conditions of the earth were like. There may have been fantastic amounts of water under the surface of the earth before the flood took place.

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At any rate, the water which was coming up from below ceased to overflow.

In addition, the rain which had been falling out of the sky no longer descended. Both from above and from below, the flood gates were closed.

**GEN 8:3            And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.**

For about six months the water level continued to drop. The ark was coming closer and closer to the earth beneath.

**GEN 8:4            And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.**

The ark touched ground again in the mountain range of Ararat. This still does not mean the occupants of the ark were free to exit and resume normal activities. It would be a considerable time before that happened.

It is commonly believed that the mountain range of Ararat was located in what we now know as Armenia. This falls in line with the supposition that the Garden of Eden was near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, also in that region of the world.

**GEN 8:5            And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.**



About ten weeks after the ark touched ground it was possible to see the tops of the highest mountains. I suppose that, even though God had shut Noah and the rest in the ark, that at this time they could look out and see the conditions around them.

**GEN 8:6            And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:**

There were times that it would have been unwise to have opened the window of the ark. The rain had been pouring down day after day. Now the rain had stopped and it was safe to open the window.

**GEN 8:7            And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.**

Noah tried a simple experiment to see if there was any possibility of leaving the ark in the near future. He sent out a raven. The raven is a carnivorous bird. It did not return to the ark but flew around seeking out food. This might not have been such a difficult task. There may have been floating carcasses upon which the raven could land and which it could eat.

**GEN 8:8            Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;**

When the raven failed to return Noah sent a different type of bird out. This time it was a dove. Perhaps the

dove would bring back evidence that sufficient land had appeared that the ark could be emptied.

**GEN 8:9**            **But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.**

The news was not cheerful. The dove came back because there was not place for it to land. Unlike the raven who would have felt no repugnance at landing on a half rotten carcass, the dove would have been repelled by such a resting place.

**GEN 8:10**            **And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;**

Noah waited another week and then sent the dove out once more. It was apparently clear to him that the time was just ahead when they would be able to leave the confines of the ark.

**GEN 8:11**            **And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.**

We do not know how long the dove flew around. It did return before dark, and in its beak it carried an olive leaf. Thus the dove and the olive branch have come to represent peace. God had punished man long enough. The earth had been purified from the sin which had polluted it.



**GEN 8:12**      **And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.**

After one more week the dove was sent out again. This time it did not return. The water had receded to the point that the dove was comfortable in separating itself from the safety of the ark.

**GEN 8:13**      **And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.**

Noah had entered the ark on the twenty seventh day of the second month of the six hundredth year of his life. As Noah looked out of the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month of the six hundred and first day of his life, he found the earth was dry. He had been in the ark for almost exactly one year.

**GEN 8:14**      **And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.**

We need to ponder some of the objections which critics of the Bible make with respect to unusual conditions prevailing for that one year. How was it possible to store enough food for all the animals for an entire year? Why did the ferocious animals not feed upon the helpless ones who would normally have fallen prey to them? Where did all the water come from? How could all that animal life survive with only one small window in the ark?



All of these questions assume that natural law had to go on without interruption during that year. That is simply not true. God could have shut the mouths of the ferocious animals as he did in the case of Daniel in the den of lions. He could have put the animals into a state of suspended animation. We would be wise not to place restrictions on the one who created the universe and established natural law in the beginning. Again I must say that my dual career in teaching science and in preaching the gospel of Christ has taught me the wonders of natural law and also the power and wisdom of the one who brought it into being.

**GEN 8:15 And God spake unto Noah, saying,**

God now had some instructions for Noah and his family. Will they do any better with this new beginning than Adam and Eve did some fifteen hundred years before this?

**GEN 8:16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.**

Just eight souls departed from the ark. This was to be the seed from which a multitude of nations would grow until God decides once more to cleanse the world by fire rather than by water.

**GEN 8:17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.**



But man is not the only living thing to come forth into this new world. Many kinds of animal life, including birds, mammals and reptiles came forth. Both man and animal were to multiply and fill the earth with life once more. Almost the same words were used here that were used when God first created man. "Be fruitful and multiply upon the earth."

**GEN 8:18            And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:**

What a strange new world Noah and his family entered. His friends of old were gone. There were no craftsmen, no musicians, no herdsmen and no political leaders. From only eight persons human society was to develop.

**GEN 8:19            Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.**

**GEN 8:20            And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.**

An altar is a place where man can acknowledge the superiority of God. Noah was very much conscious of the fact that God could have destroyed all mankind. He was grateful that this did not take place. He offered a great sacrifice from each of the various clean animals. He could have forgotten God when his feet touched dry land. Instead, he gave thanks for the preservation of his life and for the blessings which had been provided



to himself and his family.

This is the first record of man building an altar to worship Jehovah.

**GEN 8:21**        **And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.**

Noah's sacrifice pleased God. He made a promise that he would never again, until the end of time, interfere with the natural proceedings of weather and the seasons as he did at the time of the flood. Of course the New Testament predicts the end of this present heaven and earth as it is replaced by a new one in which righteousness shall dwell.

**GEN 8:22**        **While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.**

The weather and seasonal conditions may vary from month to month and from year to year. But, as long as the earth continues, there will never be such a disturbance as took place in the six hundredth year of Noah's life.





## *Chapter 9*

**GEN 9:1**            **And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.**

God created Adam and Eve for the purpose of filling the earth with humanity. If Adam and Eve had remained obedient to the will of God there would have been a far different history of human civilization. Instead, they fell to the temptations Satan placed before them. Their hearts became so wicked they thought about evil continually. Jehovah decided to eliminate all but one family and start over. Noah and his wife thus became the progenitors of every man and woman on earth.

The same command to multiply and replenish the earth is given here to Noah as was given to Adam in the beginning.

**GEN 9:2**            **And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.**

Unto man it was given to govern all three of the main categories of animal life; the birds, the beasts and the fish. It is true that in certain circumstances man may be paralyzed with fear in the presence of lions, wild elephants and so forth. Yet man has the intelligence to bring every kind of animal under his control. It is revealing to watch the complete mastery the lion tamer of the circus has over the beasts he has trained.

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GEN 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

In the beginning man was told he could eat the various types of vegetation. Note the last three verses of the first chapter of Genesis. This is a major change in God's law for man. He was originally a vegetarian. Now he is given permission to eat animals.

GEN 9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

This general permission to eat flesh had a restriction. The blood was not to be eaten with the flesh. The connection between blood and life is well known to men of every age. We "bleed to death." It was true then, and it is still true today that man is not to eat blood. The New Testament reinforces the restriction which was first given to Noah.

GEN 9:5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

Just how important does God consider the blood to be? It is important enough to him that he requires the one who murders another human to give his own life for that of the one he killed.

There is a difference between accidental killing and deliberate murder. If a man is chopping wood and the axe head comes off the handle and kills an onlooker, the man who was wielding the axe is not to be held accountable.



GEN 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

When the killing is premeditated God requires that the murderer pay with his own life for that of the one he killed. It is "tooth for tooth and life for life." Since man is made in the image of God, the murderer is in one sense murdering God.

GEN 9:7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

This verse explains why the matter of murder is so serious. God desires that the earth be filled with mankind. Anyone who murders another person has interfered with that process.

GEN 9:8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

Now God is ready to provide further instructions for the family of Noah. He is going to make a covenant with them.

GEN 9:9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

This new covenant God is to establish is not just with Noah and his immediate family. It will extend to every man and woman who will live upon the earth.

GEN 9:10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of



every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

The covenant goes even beyond humanity. It reaches to every type of animal alive. In the flood God had eliminated both men and animals. He would never do that again.

GEN 9:11 And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

Such a massive destruction of human and animal life as took place in the flood will never again occur. The next time such a destruction takes place will be at the end of the world. At that time it will be accomplished by fire and not by water.

GEN 9:12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

The Lord was ready to provide a reminder to all animal life that he would keep his promise. The reminder is to be present as long as the world stands.

GEN 9:13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

The rainbow is not an accident of nature. It is God's way of telling all animal life that he is not going to take the route he took before in washing the earth clean



through a global flood. There will be minor floods in various parts of the world, but there will never be another flood of the magnitude of the one in the time of Noah.

GEN 9:14 **And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:**

The reminder, or token, which God uses to reinforce his promise is the rainbow. When a cloud appears which might strike fear into the hearts of men that a worldwide flood could come, man will be allowed to see a rainbow contrasting with the darkness of the cloud. That rainbow will state the same thing in every age of man.

GEN 9:15 **And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.**

The message of the rainbow is that God has made a promise to man that he will never again brings such a flood as Noah passed through.

GEN 9:16 **And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.**

When God sees the rainbow which shines forth in the midst of the threatening cloud, he will be forever reminded of his promise. Animal and human life will be safe from the complete devastation which took place at that time.

GEN 9:17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

This verse seems almost as if God was placing an exclamation point after his promise. When God makes a promise, we may depend upon it. When he repeats that promise it is signed, sealed and delivered.

GEN 9:18 And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan.

The three sons of Noah were the fathers of all mankind. As we shall see later, there is a special reason for mentioning the three, and that Canaan was the son of Ham.

GEN 9:19 These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

If the reader could trace his or her family tree this far back, he would find that one of these three was his great, great, great, etc. grandfather. The main divisions of mankind did not arise through evolution. The three sons of Noah were obviously different in both mental and physical characteristics. Those characteristics have been retained to the present.

GEN 9:20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

A husbandman is one who cares for that which is under his husbandry. A human husband is expected to care for his wife and children. Animal husbandry is the



art of caring for animals. It so happened that Noah was a husband to his vineyard. He grew grapes.

GEN 9:21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

Noah drank some of the grape juice which had fermented and became drunk. Some commentators believe this was an accident and that he did not realize the consequences of his actions. I doubt that seriously. This was a sinful action on the part of Noah. Anyone who has dealt with grapes for any length of time would know the power of the fermented liquor. Noah was in such a mental condition that he lay naked in his tent, apparently either not knowing it or not caring about it.

GEN 9:22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

Ham was the first of the three brothers to discover the condition of his father. It appears that he thought it amusing and revealed the matter to his two brothers. The reason I conclude this is that Ham was condemned by his father for what he had done while the other two were exonerated.

GEN 9:23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

Shem and Japheth reacted in quite the opposite way
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to what Ham had done. It embarrassed them to the extent that they decided to place a covering over their father. They even went to far as to avoid looking at Noah while they were covering him.

**GEN 9:24            And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.**

We are not told just how Noah knew what had happened. Perhaps he was conscious enough while drunken to remember after he sobered up. Then again, it is possible that Ham bragged about having seen him, or that Shem and Japheth told him shamefacedly about the circumstances.

**GEN 9:25            And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.**

Noah was infuriated. He vented his anger upon Ham by cursing his son Canaan. I conclude that it was not just Canaan in person who was placed under the curse, but the through him all the descendants of Ham were to feel the effects of the curse.

**GEN 9:26            And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.**

In contrast to the curse which was placed upon Canaan, the son of Ham, Noah pronounced a blessing upon both of the other brothers who had treated him with respect. The son of Ham was to become servant to Shem. Again the inference seems to be that the descendants of





Ham would tend to become servants to the descendants of Shem.

**GEN 9:27            God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.**

The blessing pronounced upon Japheth has to do with the multiplicity of his descendants. There were to be more of them than those of either Shem or Ham. The descendants of Shem seem to be associated with the ownership of property. Although Japheth was to have many descendants, these descendants were to live in housing owned by the descendants of Shem. Canaan, the son of Ham, was to be the servant of both Shem and Japheth.

There have been many who believe we have here three main divisions of humankind; that is the Hamitic or African race, the Semitic or Oriental race, and the Japhetic or Caucasian race. They go on to say the African descendants of Ham would become servants to both of the other races, and that the Semitic race, of which the Jews are an important part would become property owners. The Japhetic, or Caucasian then would be the largest in number. I leave it to the reader to decide whether these blessings and curses were to be continued through the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, or whether they applied only to the ones whose names are specifically mentioned.

**GEN 9:28            And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.**

Noah was about six hundred years of age when the flood came. That would be an enormous age today. No



one lives to one fourth of that total. But it is possible that the environmental conditions were quite different before the flood. We do know that the earth was watered by a mist which came up from the ground. At the time of the flood that changed. Noah lived about two thirds of his life before the flood and one third after it.

**GEN 9:29            And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.**

In spite of this great age, Noah was not the oldest man of all time. That record belongs to Methusaleh who lived nineteen years more than Noah. Methusaleh died at the age of nine hundred sixty-nine. The only other person of whom we have a record of a longer life than Noah was Jared.

The reader should take note of the three words mentioned here "and he died." As far as the record states, with the exception of Elijah and Enoch, every man from Noah until the present time has died. All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and death is the wages of sin.



## Chapter 10

**GEN 10:1**      **Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.**

As was pointed out in the previous chapter, every human on earth has two sets of common ancestors. We are all descendants of Adam and Eve. We are also all descendants of Noah and his wife. It is a matter of interest that we know the name of Adam's wife, but we do not know the name of the wife of Noah. The reason God chose to reveal one and not the other is one of the many mysteries of the Bible hidden to the minds of men. It is not ours to question the wisdom of his decisions.

Noah had no grandchildren before the flood. Only eight souls passed through that great deluge. This meant the space taken up on the ark was less.

We are not given the names of any daughters of either Noah or his sons. I am sure that in our present day world men would consider this degradation of womanhood. God apparently had his own reasons for this decision and I do not propose to question them. His ways and his thoughts are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth.

One more point is worthy of notice here. In our present world we consider it risky to intermarry with our own cousins. This was done a few generations back when people in rural areas did not intermingle as much with other families. We know that such intermarriage resulted in physical and mental weaknesses showing up in the children of these couples. In our day cousins are advised of such dangers and usually avoid such marriages. There may have been less danger at that state in history. The number of mutational weaknesses today

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could be increased in the population of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as compared with the number in the days of Noah.

GEN 10:2 The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

I will not attempt to comment on every name listed in this genealogical record. A few who are more prominent will be mentioned.

GEN 10:3 And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

GEN 10:4 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

GEN 10:5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

The isles of the Gentiles were, in general, the lands in the northerly and easterly directions from the area of Ararat where the ark came to rest. We are talking here primarily about the Caucasian peoples. The word "isles" here should not be taken in the same sense we use it. It was probably used more in the sense of those areas which were separated from the point of origin by sizable bodies of water or by large distances. Note Jeremiah 25:22.

We do have here the first mention of a variety of languages spoken in different nations. More will be said about that just a bit later in our comments.

GEN 10:6 And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.



Four sons of Ham are listed. Egypt is at times called the “land of Ham” by the scriptures. Of these the Cushites and the Canaanites are more often mentioned than the other two. Caanan was, of course, the land which became the home of the Jews. At times Egypt was called “Mizraim.”

GEN 10:7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

The queen of Sheba is recorded to have visited Solomon to see if that which she had been told about his wisdom and wealth was truly accurate.

GEN 10:8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

It is difficult to determine whether Nimrod was simply a mighty one in the earth because of his power or because of his wisdom, or perhaps both. I think it is implied that he was interested in more than hunting animals. Control over his fellow humans very likely figures into the picture.

GEN 10:9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

It is doubtful that the statement that Nimrod was a mighty hunter “before the Lord” means his hunting was approved by God. The meaning is more likely that his hunting was observed by the Lord.



GEN 10:10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Babel is associated with the Babylonian empire. Nimrod was the first name connected with that empire which later was used by Jehovah to chastise the Jews for their apostasy from his way of life. God can make use of both those who are faithful to him and those who oppose him. His will is accomplished in the end by both his friends and his foes.

GEN 10:11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah,

From Nimrod arose the Assyrians whose capitol was the city of ancient Ninevah to which Jonah was told to preach. It is obvious that Nimrod's reputation as a mighty hunter has some connection with the greedy expansion of the Assyrians who consumed those who fell under their power.

GEN 10:12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

GEN 10:13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

Adam Clarke points out that these names ending in "im" were plural names, probably referring to an entire group of people rather than a single person.

GEN 10:14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.



The Philistines were a grievous thorn in the side of the Jewish people for generations. They were a physically strong people and the Jews had trouble trying to take the land of Canaan. The Jews finally gave up and attempted to live along with them in the land. This led to serious confrontation.

GEN 10:15 And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,

GEN 10:16 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,

GEN 10:17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

GEN 10:18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

GEN 10:19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

There are some very unsavory names in this list of Canaanite people. They were idolators. They were sensual. They were corrupt in many ways. It is little wonder that God told the Israelites to drive them completely out of the land.

GEN 10:20 These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

Ham was the father of Canaan and therefore the list above refers to both of these individuals.

GEN 10:21 **Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born.**

From Eber comes the name "Hebrews." Of course it was through the line of Shem that the Saviour came.

GEN 10:22 **The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.**

From Aram came the Aramaeans who founded the city of Damascus in Syria.

GEN 10:23 **And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.**

GEN 10:24 **And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.**

GEN 10:25 **And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.**

Did this division of the earth in the days of Eber a matter of shifting of the earths crust in such manner that continents were formed? Did it have to do with the portion of the earth that came under the influence of certain nations? Was it related to the confusion of tongues which we note in the next chapter? I do not propose to answer the question for certain. Since there is some elaboration of the origin of languages in chapter eleven, I tend to think that is the point of this verse. I am not sure.



GEN 10:26 **And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,**

GEN 10:27 **And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,**

GEN 10:28 **And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,**

We find the queen of Sheba visiting Solomon to verify what she had heard about the wisdom and the power of the wise man.

GEN 10:29 **And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.**

Solomon's ships traveled to Ophir to obtain gold for the decoration of the temple in Jerusalem.

GEN 10:30 **And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east.**

GEN 10:31 **These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.**

GEN 10:32 **These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.**

I would remind the reader that every man on earth is his or her relative. We are all descendants of Adam,



and we are all descendants of Noah. It will be a point of interest to take note of what happens as the world grows smaller and smaller. If God does not bring an end to the heavens and the earth within the next century, and if men continue to intermarry as they have been in the latter part of the twentieth century, it may well be that the various races will become blended into one. When I was a youngster in the nineteen forties and fifties it was uncommon to see orientals in the area where I lived. Now they are common. The segregation of blacks and whites is becoming less distinct with each decade in the United States. I can only invite the reader to watch and wait. Very interesting things may lie ahead.

Chapter 11

GEN 11:1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

Civilization began with Adam and Eve. During the flood all of the descendants of this couple were destroyed except for Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives. Eight souls constituted the entire human family. We are all related through Adam and through Noah. We should be more tolerant of those with different skin colors and physical characteristics. We are one, whether or not we accept the fact.

All men spoke the same language. We are not told what that language was. Speculation is useless. If, however, the events of this chapter had not taken place we are made to wonder if all men might still share a common tongue.

GEN 11:2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

The journey mentioned here may well have been relatively short. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are both mentioned in connection with the Garden of Eden. The plains of Shinar are thought to lie between these two rivers. Since it would have been uninhabited when they arrived, the name Shinar was given sometime between their arrival there and the time in which Moses penned the book of Genesis. It is not surprising that they decided to settle in that area. It was likely very fertile land in the flood plains of the rivers.



GEN 11:3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

We can also understand their decision to make brick. Clay is a useful ingredient in the manufacture of brick. Clay would presumably be found in such a flood plain. But what was the purpose of making these bricks? We shall soon see.

GEN 11:4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

There are three words found in this verse that indicate an attitude of independence and pride on the part of these persons. The three words are: city, tower and name. Note that a city is an organization of people, held together for the common welfare. A tower is a monument which can be seen and admired by the onlookers. The name they cherished would have unified them in their achievements.

Now the reader may wonder why I call attention to these terms. Let me explain. God had commanded Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth. The intentions of those who came to the plain of Shinar were exactly the opposite. They intended to build a powerful civilization in that place and they had no concern for the rest of the earth. A little insight might have caused them to anticipate the reaction God would have toward their efforts.

GEN 11:5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.



This statement does not mean God is limited in space or time. The fact that he came down only means he recognized what they were doing in the building of the city and the construction of the tower. The phrase “children of men” emphasizes the attitude of pride the builders had. They were placing a much higher value on their ability to direct their own steps than was justified. The children of God honor and respect his will. The children of men place their confidence in their own physical and mental abilities.

GEN 11:6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

As I write these comments in the year of 1998 I wonder how far human civilization is from the attitude of these settlers in the plains of Shinar. Little by little human society as a whole is becoming interdependent. If the stock market plunges in Asia, the U.S. market trembles along with it. Automobiles are manufactured in one country and sold in another. Food is grown in one nation and consumed in another. Communication lines extend through much of the globe. Medical advances have improved living standards worldwide.

Along with these changes we can see the increase in the pride of humanity in it's own ability to handle it's affairs without divine assistance. Infidelity is everywhere. Morality is dissolving. Is God presently thinking much the same thing as he was when the city and the tower were underway? It would not be surprising.



GEN 11:7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

The plural is used here. Who does "us" refer to? It could have reference to the angels who serve at God's beck and call. It could also have reference to the three members of the Godhead, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit.

Whatever the case, the aim of those who came down is clear. They would see that men ceased their unified rebellion against the will of God. They would find that they were unable to converse with one another. This probably does not mean that no one individual could understand any one other individual. There were very likely groups who could converse without being able to understand those of other groups.

Again, we are not told how this was accomplished. There is no need to know the "how." All we are given is the fact. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare what took place on the day of Pentecost when the church was established. At that time there were men from seventeen different nations present. They were all able to understand the preaching of the apostles though they spoke different languages. They were amazed at what was happening. This was the opposite of that which took place when God confounded the one language and established a number of them.

GEN 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

God left no doubt about his will here. They were to cover the face of the earth. If they did not do it voluntarily, he would enforce it anyway. Apparently there were some who did remain in that city. It later became



synonymous with evil and rebellion against God and his people. It became the infamous city of Babylon, the great harlot city condemned in the book of Revelation.

GEN 11:9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

The very name of the city indicated it's spiritual chaos. Babel means confusion. Men were quickly spread out to various parts of the earth. This runs contrary to the evolutionary thought of the nineteen hundreds. According to such theory man is the descendant of lower species of life.

Did the Lord pick them up physically and set them down on other continents? Just how did they reach the distant points? We are not told. We do know God can work in many ways, his wonders to perform.

GEN 11:10 These are the generations of Shem:

Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood:

Rather than following the progress of all the various families developing from those who were scattered, the Lord focuses upon the family of Shem. It is through that family that the Saviour entered this world.

It is almost as if God were inviting us to date the age of the earth from the figures given in the rest of this chapter. The ages of these persons are noticeably less



than those of the patriarchs who lived before the flood. Noah lived 930 years, Methusaleh lived 969 years. Now we find much shorter lives. The flood may have altered the climate from that time forward. It is also possible that men's sins resulted in abbreviated life spans.

GEN 11:11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

Shem, one of the three sons of Noah, was born 2446 B.C. and lived to be 600.

GEN 11:12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah:

Arphaxad was born 2346 B.C., and lived to be 438.

GEN 11:13 And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:

Salah was born 2311 B.C., and lived to be 433.

GEN 11:15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:16 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:

Eber was born 2281 B.C. and lived to be 464.



GEN 11:17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:

Peleg was born 2247 B.C., and lived to be 239.

GEN 11:19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug:

Reu was born 2217 B.C., and lived to be 239.

GEN 11:21 And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:

Serug was born 2185 B.C., and lived to be 230.

GEN 11:23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:

Nahor was born 2155 B.C., and lived to be 148.



GEN 11:25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

GEN 11:26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah was born 2126 B.C., and lived to be 205.

GEN 11:27 Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

GEN 11:28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

Abraham was born 1996 B.C., and lived to be 175.

GEN 11:29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

At this point we have followed the line of Shem from the time of the flood to the time of Abraham, who is called the "Father of the faithful." As pointed out previously, this is the line through which the Saviour was born into the world. This is the line which produced God's chosen people, Israel. God was particularly interested in the redemption of man. Thus we are given the history of the Jewish people rather than a complete history of mankind.

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**GEN 11:30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.**

A woman who was barren in the time of Abraham felt shame and disgrace. It is natural for women to desire children. Their body and mind are both peculiarly adapted to the bearing and rearing of offspring. Sarah must have been extremely concerned.

**GEN 11:31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.**

Terah, the father of Abraham decided to set out for the land of Canaan. Since we are backtracking a bit here it seems likely that Abraham had already received the call from Jehovah to go to the land which he would be shown. Abraham was almost certainly the one who suggested that the journey be made.

The group included Terah, His son, Abraham, Sarah, Abraham's wife, and Lot who was the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother. It may have included others who are not mentioned since Haran became known as Nahor's city. Nahor is probably not mentioned because he does not play a significant part as Abraham moved into the land of Canaan.

At any rate, they left Ur where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were located, and began a trip in a northwesterly direction following the fertile crescent around the desert country lying west of Ur and between Ur and Canaan. They paused in Haran and spent some time there.



**GEN 11:32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.**

One is caused to wonder what Terah would have thought if he could have known what an impact his son Abraham would have upon all of humanity until the end of time and beyond.

## *Chapter 12*

**GEN 12:1** Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

Jehovah obviously had a reason for separating Abram, or Abraham from his native land and from his family relationships. We can only guess as to what that reason was. It is true, however, that the area where Abraham grew up became a center of great wickedness and rebellion against God.

There are many Christians today who will feel sympathy with Abraham. It is not easy to sever kinship ties. Yet hundreds of Christians have made that sacrifice when it became apparent that the influence of the family was hindering service to the Lord.

The land about which God was telling Abraham was Canaan. It could be reached by following the fertile crescent around the desert which lay on the west side of Ur and between Ur and Canaan. Canaan was situated on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea to the northeast of Egypt.

**GEN 12:2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Abraham was informed of three things God would do for him. Then he was told of a privilege and responsibility Abraham would have. First, God would form a great nation, beginning with this man. That nation was Israel. Fleshly Israel did not have a great population when compared with that of modern nations such as the United States, China or Russia. Israel was great because it was

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the nation chosen by God to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind.

The second and third promises are closely related. God promised Abraham that he would bless him and make his name great. Except for the miraculous birth of his son, Isaac, Abraham would have had no children through Sarah. When God caused Sarah to give birth to Isaac it was a wondrous blessing to the two of them. Through this blessing a channel was provided through which Abraham could become known as the "Father of the faithful." Truly his name has become great in the minds of vast millions of persons.

But God also expected Abraham to make proper use of that which had been placed in his hands. He was to become a blessing to the entire world as he lived a godly life and passed his faith on to Isaac, Jacob and finally to spiritual Israel which includes the Gentile world.

GEN 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

It is impossible to successfully oppose those who remain faithful to Jehovah. He will be with them in the face of every foe. Those who aid God's people will be favored, and those who try to harm his people will face his wrath. This may not be evident at all times. But God is very jealous for the welfare of his children.

I believe I am safe in saying there are Christians today in every nation under heaven. We are not all fleshly descendants of Abraham. All true Christians are the spiritual descendants of this great man. He deserves respect and our gratitude for allowing God to use him in the development of the scheme of redemption.



GEN 12:4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Abraham did as God instructed him. He did, however, take his nephew Lot. This was to work to his disadvantage later. It is never wise to obey God in part. To whatever degree we fail to keep his commandments, we may expect unpleasant consequences. We will have occasion to refer to this a bit later when Sodom enters the picture.

A seventy-five year old man today is aged. This was not the case with Abraham. Abraham lived to the age of one hundred seventy-five. His age at seventy-five would correspond to that of a man thirty-five or forty now. He would have been in his prime.

GEN 12:5 And 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.

The group who left Haran to move toward the promised land consisted of Abraham and Sarah, Lot and his wife, and an undetermined number of persons whom Abraham and Lot had gotten while in Haran. Normally the Bible would use the term "begotten" if these souls were the children of Abraham and Lot. For that reason it seems more reasonable to think they were servants or perhaps persons who desired to go with them to Canaan.

GEN 12:6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

The place called Sichem is also known as Shechem later on. It lay very nearly in the middle of Canaan, some thirty miles north of the Dead Sea and about forty miles south of the Sea of Galilee. The group must have come down from the north on the west side of the Jordan. Shechem was at the foot of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerazim. It was here that God called for Israel to choose either blessings or cursings; blessings for obedience and cursings for disobedience.

There is reason to believe the word translated "plain" would be better rendered as "Oak." The translators of the American Standard Version used the word oak rather than plain. The name probably refers to either one or more oak trees growing in the area.

According to Genesis 10:6, Canaan was a son of Ham. The descendants of Canaan lived in the land when Abraham arrived there. They had given the land its name.

GEN 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Abraham had done as the Lord commanded him in leaving the land of his fathers. Since he had obeyed that command, God rewarded him by giving him a new land. It was not only to be his land. It was to be passed on to his descendants. This would be true until the new spiritual Israel replaced fleshly Israel. Spiritual Israel is to inherit the entire earth. See Psalm 37 in its entirety and compare it with Matthew 5:5.

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**GEN 12:8** And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

Bethel was about twenty miles south of Shechem. This was the place where Jacob later saw a ladder leading to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it. The place was called Luz before Jacob gave it the name Bethel. Bethel means “gate of God.”

**GEN 12:9** And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

Abraham was to see the entire land. He had entered from the north and now was moving ever southward. Egypt was just around the bend of the Mediterranean Sea. At this time Abraham had no idea what lay ahead in Israeli and Egyptian relationships.

**GEN 12:10** And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

Abraham had been promised a land flowing with milk and honey. It must have been a bitter disappointment to find famine in the land. Sometimes we have to have a great deal of faith to endure until the promises of God are fulfilled. I believe Abraham made another mistake in going down into Egypt to solve the famine problem. While he was in the process of seeking an answer to one problem, he ran headlong into a second one.

**GEN 12:11** And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

How could Sarah have been fair to look upon at the age of sixty-five. When Abraham was one hundred, Sarah was ninety. Abraham was seventy-five at this time. Therefore, Sarah must have been at least sixty-five. Most present day women are wrinkled and gray headed at the age of sixty-five. They might well have a certain beauty that comes with age. But that was not the kind of beauty Abraham was worried about. The reader is reminded again that people lived much long then than now. Sarah may have had the appearance of a beautiful woman of thirty today.

At least Abraham was very concerned about what might happen when the Egyptians cast their eyes in her direction. He felt that he must find a solution to the problem.

**GEN 12:12** Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

Abraham was afraid the Egyptians would go so far as to kill him in order to possess Sarah for themselves. Since he was Sarah's husband, the simplest thing for them to do would be to murder him and take his wife.

Now if Abraham had remained in the land of Canaan rather than going down into Egypt, this problem would not have arisen. Would God have seen that he was fed in the land which he had been promised. I think so! The question is moot. He made his choice to leave Canaan and enter Egypt. He must now live with his decision.



**GEN 12:13** Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

There was a way to save his own life. He would pass Sarah off as his sister. Then the Egyptians would take her, but they would let him stay alive since he had no claim on her. This seems a little selfish on the part of Abraham. He was sacrificing the virtue of his wife to save his own life. What would I do in Abraham's position? I like to think I would claim my wife, even if it meant the loss of my own life. We do not know how we would react under similar circumstances until we come face to face with them.

Abraham's request that Sarah say she was his sister was a half truth. From Genesis 20:12 we find she was his sister through his father but not through his mother. She was his half-sister. Half truths are lies.

**GEN 12:14** And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

It happened just as Abraham feared that it would. The Egyptians at once took note of Sarah's great beauty. This is interesting in that Sarah was probably much lighter in complexion than the dark skinned Egyptians. That does not seem to have prevented their conclusion that she was beautiful. Light skinned European men can certainly feel attraction to very beautiful dark skinned African women. The reverse is also possible.

**GEN 12:15** The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.



I suspect Abraham had not suspected it would go this far. The woman was so fair they felt they should call her to the attention of Pharaoh. Pharaoh was impressed with her and he invited her to become a part of his household. It is clear from the next few verses that Pharaoh actually intended to make her his wife. This does not mean she would have been his only wife. He may have had a number of wives. But he did intend to marry her.

**GEN 12:16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.**

Abraham came out of the deal very well. Pharaoh enriched him with much livestock and both male and female servants. Instead of losing his life, Abraham had become wealthy as a result of his lie. Sometimes wickedness pays off in the short run. It does not do so when viewed to the end. Abraham was to find that out.

**GEN 12:17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.**

We do not know what these plagues were, nor do we know how Pharaoh concluded they were the result of his intentions toward Sarah. God could have appeared to him in a dream or in some other manner and informed him of the truth. Sarah could also have told him the plagues were associated with the direction things were going with respect to she and her husband's future.

**GEN 12:18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?**



Regardless of the manner in which Pharaoh discovered the reason for his misfortune, he went straight to Abraham and confronted him with his deception. This is most serious. Those who are not the people of God should never find occasion to point out the sins of those who claim to be God's own. Through his lie, Abraham had brought much misery upon Pharaoh and his people. He demanded to know why Abraham would resort to such actions.

**GEN 12:19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.**

We will never know whether Abraham was correct in his worries about what would happen if he admitted Sarah was his wife when he entered Egypt. Perhaps the Egyptians would have respected them as husband and wife and would have treated them in decent fashion. On the other hand, Abraham might have been right.

Right now there was not question at all about what Pharaoh would do about the matter. He said, "Here is your wife. Take her and go!" Take your plagues along with you.

**GEN 12:20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.**

Pharaoh was not taking any chances. He not only sent Abraham and Sarah away. He told him to take everything that he owned. Nothing was to be left behind. I get the feeling that either Pharaoh was scared to death the plagues might continue, or he was a man with enough character that he would not have taken Sarah in the



first place if he had known she was Abraham's wife. It might have been a combination of the two.

## *Chapter 13*

**GEN 13:1** And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

Abraham had gone through the land God had promised him, and on into Egypt. He had done this because, in a time of famine, he had not trusted in the providential care of God sufficiently. God could have made the necessary provisions if Abraham had decided to stay in the promised land.

Now, after having seen the consequences of his unwise actions, he was to come back into the land of Canaan. Sarah, his wife was still with him. He was fortunate in that matter. It could have been otherwise if the Pharaoh had not decided it was unwise to work against Abraham's God. Abraham took his family and his possessions, along with Lot, as they came into Canaan at the southern end.

Lot was still with him. When God called Abraham he had been told to leave his kindred and his native country of Ur of the Chaldees and move to Canaan. He did not leave all of his kindred behind. This was to result in serious problems.

**GEN 13:2** And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

Abraham was rich because of the gifts he had been given by Pharaoh. He had cast his eyes upon Sarai and saw that she was very beautiful. To gain favor with Abraham, Pharaoh had showered him with gold, silver and livestock. When Abraham left Egypt he was allowed to keep these gifts. Pharaoh wanted to separate himself completely from Abraham.

**GEN 13:3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;**

When Abraham had entered the land he stopped at Bethel and Ai and built an altar there. He was now coming back to the place where he should have remained all the time. Bethel and Ai are about ten miles north of the city of Jerusalem.

**GEN 13:4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.**

Now he was ready to trust in Jehovah. To call upon the name of the Lord is more than just to offer a prayer for his assistance. It is to put one's life into harmony with God's will and live in such a manner that God will be pleased to guide and strengthen his soul. Where Abraham had failed to trust God before, he will now offer his complete trust and confidence.

**GEN 13:5 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.**

Abraham was not the only one to profit by the gifts in Egypt. By being associated with his uncle, he had also gained large numbers of sheep, goats and tents. It must have been quite a sight to see. There is no telling how far out the caravan stretched as they moved into Canaan.

**GEN 13:6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their**

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substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

It would be impossible for such a multitude of livestock to survive if they stayed in one area. The grass was simply not sufficient to feed all of the animals owned by both Lot and Abraham.

GEN 13:7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

It is not difficult to understand why strife would arise between the herdsmen of the two men. Each had the responsibility of caring for his own master's animals. Such strife would bear much unwanted malice.

In addition, the livestock of the Canaanites and the Perizzites would require pasture. Those people of the land would have been ill in mind already over what they would have seen as the invasion of the area by the herds and flocks of Abraham and Lot. When they saw strife arising between these two men the Canaanites and Perizzites would have rejoiced over it.

This is precisely what happens when the world sees strife between Christians. They then feel justified in pointing fingers at those Christians and accusing them of not practicing what they preach. The world will never be converted by Christians who cannot get along with other Christians.

GEN 13:8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.



Abraham demonstrated somewhat more character here than he did when he failed to trust the Lord and went into Egypt because of the famine. He also stood up a little straighter than he did when he lied to Pharaoh about his wife Sarah. He was now willing to do what was needed to eliminate the animosity which was building up between the herdsmen for the two men.

GEN 13:9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

God makes it clear in his Word that he takes note of those who sacrifice to insure the well being of others. He will more than make up for the losses sustained when proud and greedy men take advantage of his people. He will do just that for Abraham in the near future. There would be enough for the animals of both men. Lot could choose the portion of the land he desired. Abraham would take the part that was left.

I mentioned before that God had commanded Abraham to leave his kindred behind when he went to the land God would show him. Abraham did not do that. He took Lot and his family with him. At this point God is ready to enforce his instructions. Lot and Abraham will be separated.

GEN 13:10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

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The two men were in a position to look down across much of the land. When Lot saw the fertile plain of the Jordan and the cities which nestled on that plain, he was reminded of the fertility of the Garden of Eden and of that in the valley of the Nile in Egypt. This must have been mighty impressive scenery for a man with a lot of livestock needing pasture.

Some have said Lot was apparently not with Abraham when Abraham went into Egypt. He is not mentioned for several chapters. This verse proves differently. Lot had seen the fertile land near the Nile River.

There are others who have denied Sodom and Gomorrah ever existed. They have contended that these are fictitious cities. That position has also fallen before the spades of the geologists and archeologists. Enough evidence has been uncovered to leave no doubt that these two cities did exist.

**GEN 13:11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.**

Lot chose the rich and luxurious lowland plain. He journeyed eastward toward the Jordan and well developed cities. This was a serious mistake. Many men have made a similar mistake in later years. They have chosen green lawns and bustling cities in which to raise their children. All too often the corruption and greed in such places has resulted in the children growing up infected with wicked and covetous minds.

**GEN 13:12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.**

Abraham moved into the higher land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. It may not have been as rich and luxurious as the valley of the Jordan, but it had a far higher moral level. Lot began a dangerous journey toward the moral cesspool called Sodom.

**GEN 13:13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.**

The sexual perversion of the men of Sodom was so grievous that our present day word for men having sexual relations with other men is the word "sodomy." It was wrong in the time of Abraham and Lot. It is still just as wrong today as it was then. Lot had placed himself and his family in a very precarious situation.

**GEN 13:14 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:**

God had noticed the sacrifice Abraham had made when he allowed Lot to choose the portion of the land he desired, while Abraham agreed to take that part which Lot did not value as highly. He was ready to renew his promised blessing to Abraham and his seed. Lot had lifted up his eyes and looked upon the plain of Jordan. God used the same words to guide Abraham's thoughts. He told Abraham to "Lift up his eyes." But this time it is not just the plain of Jordan which God promised Abraham. All the land to the north, south, east and west was to belong to him.

**GEN 13:15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.**



All of the land would belong to Abraham, even that which Lot had chosen. It would belong to Abraham, and it would belong to his seed as long as time would last. Jehovah does not forget his promises as long as men attempt to keep up their end of the relationship with Him.

Here is a point of dispute between Jews and Christians. The Jew sees this promise as referring only to the fleshly descendants of Abraham; that is the Jews. They believe the Messiah has not yet come. But that when he does come earthly Jerusalem will be hailed as the capitol of the entire world, and the Jews will be in control of all nations.

**GEN 13:16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.**

It is true that there are many fleshly descendants of Abraham today. The Jews and the Arabs both trace their ancestry back to his man. However; this falls short of the magnitude of the promise made in this verse. Every Christian of every century is a spiritual descendant of Abraham. He is the “Father of the faithful.” The book of Galatians makes the seed promise very clear. Gentile disciples of Jesus Christ are included in the “seed of Abraham.” It is little wonder that God used the sand of the sea to illustrate the descendants of this great man.

**GEN 13:17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.**

Abraham was not only to gaze upon the land. He was to rise and walk through it to survey what the Lord

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had promised would be his. The reader would do well to read the thirty-seventh Psalm. It repeats over and over the joyous promise that the meek shall inherit the earth. This follows the pattern of Abraham and Lot. In a spirit of meekness Abraham offered Lot his choice of the land. God then came back and offered all of the land to Abraham.

GEN 13:18 Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Abraham left the area of Bethel and Ai. These two cities were north of Jerusalem. Hebron was about twenty miles south of Jerusalem and perhaps fifteen miles from the southern border of Canaan.

As soon as Abraham arrived at Mamre in the plains on which it rested, he built an altar for the praise of the Lord. While Lot was pitching his tent toward the corrupt cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham was settling at Hebron and erecting an altar to Jehovah where he could give him honor and glory. The contrast is very sharp.



Chapter 14

GEN 14:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

Abraham had now settled in the land of Canaan. He and his people were surrounded by pagan people who worshipped a number of false gods. It would fall Abraham's lot to promulgate a people who were faithful to Jehovah, the only true and living God.

At the very outset of this chapter it is necessary to point out a false impression which has been a part of the thinking of many who have read and studied this chapter. These were not kings of large nations with armies of one hundred thousand men. These were territorial kings who ruled over a small population. It is true that Shinar was in the area we know as Babylonia. But we have cities called Boston today that are not the Boston metropolis of the northeast. It is true that Tidal is called king of nations. But this may well have been a title which he took upon himself to magnify his influence.

Each of these four kings seems to have had rulership in areas to the northeast of the area where Abraham and Lot had settled.

GEN 14:2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

We are not informed as to the reason for these kings making war upon the kings mentioned in this verse. There are two suggestions. One is that they depended

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heavily upon the trade route which passed through the territory where Abraham had settled. Another is that there were mineral deposits in lower Canaan that they had their eyes on.

Whatever the case, the four kings invaded the region controlled by the five kings listed. The reader will note that one of the five was king of Sodom. Another was king of Gomorrah. These were not people whom God was interested in promoting. They were idolatrous and immoral people. If Lot had not lived in Sodom at this time we might well not have ever known about these kings. But Lot did live in Sodom, and that brings on more discussion.

**GEN 14:3 All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.**

The vale of Siddim was located at the southern end of the Dead Sea. There were not only salt deposits there. There were also tar pits. It was not the most desirable of sites. It was, however, a place where a battle could be waged between the kings. The five kings of lower Canaan banded together to resist the onslaught of the four kings who had come in from the northeast.

**GEN 14:4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.**

For twelve years the five kings had paid tribute the Chedorlaomer. The next year they rebelled and strove for independence.

**GEN 14:5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him,**

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and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

From this verse we gather than Chedorlaomer was the most important of the four kings. He came with the help of the other three and began to move southward, taking one territory after another as he moved forward.

GEN 14:6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

There is evidence that they very nearly demolished every cluster of people who stood in their way. They would kill the men, steal the possessions and capture the women.

GEN 14:7 And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.

They were getting closer and closer to Sodom and adjoining regions. The kings of the south were becoming fearful that they would be next in line. They decided to form a confederacy to do battle against the invaders.

GEN 14:8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

There were five kings from central Canaan and only four who had come in bent on conquest. That might have



been in favor of the five if each had the same number of followers. Since we do not know the number of soldiers each had, we can make no assumptions as to the relative strength of the opposing forces.

GEN 14:9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.

Will the four invader kings win, or will the five be able to resist and break their subjection to Chedorlaomer after the twelve years of tribute?

GEN 14:10 And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.

The critics of the Bible tell us there is a contradiction here. The king of Sodom fell at this time. Later we are told that he expressed his appreciation to Abraham for driving off the invaders. This is not a valid objection. The scripture does not say they were killed. It says they fell, which probably means they lost their power to contend with the invaders. What we can be sure of is that the invading kings scored a complete rout of the five opposing kings.

GEN 14:11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

The four kings plundered the defeated people. They took food, clothing and anything else that looked appealing to them.

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**GEN 14:12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.**

But they did make one serious mistake. The captured Lot and made off with him. Previously we read that Lot had pitched his tent toward Sodom. At this time we find he was dwelling in Sodom. Although he is said to have been a righteous man, he was not a very wise man to have located his family among such a wicked and immoral neighborhood. Do you suppose he had second thoughts about having chosen the well watered plains of the Jordan and moving into the city of Sodom?

**GEN 14:13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.**

One of the people of the land was able to evade capture. He quickly went to Abraham and informed him of the bad news. Abraham had settled in the plain of Mamre. He had agreed with Mamre, Eshcol and Aner that they would stand together in time of trouble.

We do not know how many fighting men Mamre, Eshcol and Aner were capable of sending to battle. This could have been a sizable number. If each of them had as many as Abraham did the total force might have been over one thousand.

**GEN 14:14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.**

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Abraham was able to muster three hundred and eighteen men of his own household. It is not possible to determine whether the term "his own house" is talking only about his own fleshly issue, or whether it could be extended to those who had allied themselves with him. He did have concubines. There could have been a number of children through them.

The four kings had gone back toward the north of Canaan. Abraham followed them until he caught up with them near Dan. Dan was known as a northern location in Canaan. We do not know whether the armies of the four kings realized they were being pursued. If they had known, it seems logical that they would have turned around and joined in battle with Abraham before they traveled from the south of the Dead Sea to the northern parts of Canaan.

GEN 14:15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

This verse strengthens our view that they did not know they were being pursued. Abraham waited until nightfall. Then he divided his forces and surprised them similar to the battle that Gideon won with his three hundred men.

Again we find the critics of the Bible having a picnic. They can hardly see how one man with three hundred and eighteen supporters could defeat four kings with thousands of soldiers. The critics make numerous logical mistakes. They do not know how many soldiers were provided to Abraham by Mamre, Eshcol and Aner. They do not know how many soldiers the four kings possessed. Nor do they take into consideration that God would have

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been on the side of Abraham. If God be for us, who can be against us.

**GEN 14:16** And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Abraham and his forces were able to subdue the forces of the four kings. They recaptured all of the possessions which had been taken from the five kings. They released Lot and repossessed his goods. This was no meagre amount. Lot had been enriched, along with his uncle Abraham when he left Egypt. The women and the subjects of the five kings were all released.

**GEN 14:17** And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

The king of Sodom was alive. He had fallen in defeat. He had not fallen dead. Now that Abraham had driven off feared conquerors he was delighted to welcome him back. The king's dale sounds like a particularly attractive place which had been devoted to the king's pleasure.

**GEN 14:18** And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

The next few verses are among the most mysterious of the entire Bible. Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine. We might assume this just meant food and drink. There is a difficulty with this. Did Abraham have a shortage of food and drink after having recovered the



goods which had been taken by the invading army? Is it a coincidence that the words bread and wine are the two items used on the communion table for Christians on the Lord's Day? Just who was Melchizedek? He is king of Salem. This can mean Jerusalem. But it can also mean "King of Peace." At another place he is called "King of Righteousness." He is called in the book of Hebrews both a priest and a king.

Some believe him to have been king of Jerusalem at the time. Since he had no genealogical record, nor any record of his death, they say the statement in Hebrews that he had neither beginning nor end of days just meant we have no record of either one.

Another group, however, believe he may have been a manifestation of the Word of God and compare this scene with that of the third angel who appeared to Abraham, and whom Abraham called Lord, or with the fourth person who appeared in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrews. Abraham ranked very high among men of faith. Yet Abraham paid tithes to this king. The reader is referred to the sixth and seventh chapter of Hebrews for further comparison.

**GEN 14:19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:**

Hebrews says the greater blesses the lesser. Melchizedek blessed Abraham. This was no pagan priest who blessed Abraham. It was a priest who understood Jehovah to be the creator of heaven and earth. Jesus Christ was both a king and a priest.

**GEN 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.**

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Is it possible for a man to bless God? What does God need that man can offer? About the only thing I can think of is praise and glory. I do not know for certain just who Melchizedek was. I do know he served as a type for Jesus Christ. He is mentioned in Psalm 110:4 as well as in the book of Hebrews.

Tithes are mentioned here. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. The lesser pays tithes to the greater. We do not know whether these tithes were a tenth of the goods Abraham repossessed from the four kings, or whether they were a tenth of all his personal possessions. He clearly recognized by offering these tithes that God had given him the battle which had just been won.

GEN 14:21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

This is a remarkable statement from the man who ruled the city of Sodom. We would hardly expect such a gracious offer. Abraham can have all of the goods which the invaders took. All he needs to do is to return the people to their homes. This is out of pocket with the shortage of morality we find at the time of Lot's difficulties, when his wife was turned to a pillar of salt.

GEN 14:22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

Abraham refused to take the spoils. He had made a promise before God that he would not take anything for himself. This is interesting. He was happy to take that which he had gained while in Egypt with him when he



left. There must be a difference in the two cases. I suspect that he had pleaded with God to give him the victory for the sake of the people and not for any personal profit. In that case he would need to act just as he did here to keep that promise.

GEN 14:23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

He would take absolutely nothing, not even a shoelace. These goods did not belong to him. They belonged to the people of Sodom. The right thing was to return them. The king might be generous at the moment. Later, he could regret his action and claim Abraham had prospered at his own expense. Abraham well knew that he did not need the goods of the people of Sodom. God was perfectly able to bless him beyond all expectations.

GEN 14:24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Though Abraham did not desire any of the goods for himself, he did feel it would be in order for those who had served in the battle to be remunerated for their time and effort. He desired nothing.

Chapter 15

GEN 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

After these things is a reference to the invasion by the four kings and the resulting conflict. This included the



capture of Lot and his subsequent release by Abraham. It also included the paying of tithes to Melchizedek and the refusal to accept any of the spoil of the battle on the part of Abraham.

God appeared at this time to Abraham in a vision. A vision differs from a dream in that the person seeing the vision is awake at the time but sees events occurring like one would in a dream. God had taken note that Abraham had refused to enrich himself by accepting the goods the king of Sodom had offered him. In the vision God assured him that he did not need such goods. God himself would see to it that he received his reward. God would be both a shield from his enemies and a reward for his service. Abraham was to “Fear not!” But what would Abraham fear? Had he not just vanquished the invading kings and rescued Lot from them?

The fear was found in the fact that Abraham and Sarah were growing old and Sarah had not yet born that child through whom God had promised the nations would be blessed. Nor had Israel yet taken control of the promised land. Both the land promise and the Seed promise were taking longer than Abraham might have expected.

GEN 15:2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

Abraham connected the reward God had said he would give him with the birth of an heir through whom the world would be blessed. He replied to God that he had not yet received a child. A servant who was not of his own flesh was in line to inherit his possessions.

GEN 15:3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou



hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

Children are a gift of the Lord. Abraham very well knew that he would not beget a child until God was ready to see it accomplished. All he could do was wait. God had recognized that he was becoming somewhat anxious that he had seen no action.

GEN 15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

The word of the LORD is God's means of communication with mankind. It sometimes came in dreams or visions. It sometimes came, as it did to Moses, through the finger of God writing upon stone tablets. And in our own time it has come through the pages of the Bible. It was with God in the beginning. It became flesh and dwelt among men when Jesus lived and taught his truths.

This time, in Abraham's case, it was to give a strong measure of comfort and encouragement to a man who needed it badly. Abraham's servant was not to be the heir which God had promised. He would see a son who was begotten through his own relationships with his wife Sarah. Sarah was not mentioned at this time, but it was she who would bear the child.

GEN 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

God commanded that Abraham look up into the heavens and try to count the stars. He then assured him



that his descendants would be as innumerable as the stars at which he was gazing. God knew what he was talking about. During one lifetime it would be absolutely impossible for a man to count the stars. Counting one per second it would require many times the number of seconds in a single lifetime.

Of course the point is that Abraham need not be concerned that as yet he still had no heir. God would provide him with one. And from that child there would be a host of offspring.

GEN 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

There are those who make entirely too much out of the idea that God counted Abraham's belief to him for righteousness. They would have us believe Abraham's righteousness had nothing to do with his own obedience. They would like for us to see this as the pattern of salvation for all men. "Faith only." Abraham had been faithful for a long time. Faith without works is dead. Abraham had such confidence in the grace of God that he separated himself from the land and the people where he grew up. He had placed his life in God's hand and God had seen it.

This was but one more step in his walk with God. He had been wondering. God intervened and assured him there was no need to fear. He would be true to his promise. The promise would be even more impressively kept than Abraham could imagine. The righteous are not forsaken. Abraham demonstrated his trust in God by believing God's word. God knew his righteous pattern of life was continuing.

GEN 15:7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

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The Lord made certain Abraham realized who was speaking to him. It was not some man who conversed with him. It was the God of heaven and earth. It was the same God who had commanded that he leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to a land which he would be shown. This land in which he found himself was the land that had been promised.

**GEN 15:8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?**

Abraham was still not quite satisfied. He needed more than just a statement that the promises would be kept. It is not always wise to tempt God by asking Him for more confirmation than he has already given us. We are given enough that we should be confident of God's trustworthiness. Abraham was taking a chance when he requested that the Lord give him proof that he would keep his promise.

**GEN 15:9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.**

Abraham was fortunate. God was gracious unto him and granted his request. Abraham wished for the type of confirmation men made when they made promises. It was common for them to do just what Abraham now saw before him. Men would offer sacrifices and then would pass between these sacrifices as a means of assuring one another of their sincerity.

Abraham was told to bring five animals as a sacrifice. Each of these was a clean animal which God would specify



under the law of Moses. One commentator remarked that the donkey was missing here and that it was a clean animal.

**GEN 15:10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.**

The goat, the sheep, and the heifer were cut in two pieces. The turtledove and the pigeon were not. The halves of the first three animals were separated and laid opposite one another in two rows. The whole turtledove and pigeon were placed opposite one another. Thus a path was made between the two rows with four items on each side.

**GEN 15:11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.**

The carcasses of the animals lay there for some time during daylight hours. During this time the scavenger birds attempted to feed on them. Abraham drove the birds off.

There is some discussion over whether all of the foregoing events were a part of the vision of Abraham, or whether the vision ceased with verse six and became reality.

**GEN 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.**

This verse leads some to believe there was first a vision, then a period of reality, and now a dream as nightfall came. The horror of great darkness which Abraham experienced may have been a prelude to the



information God was about to reveal to him. The picture was not all sweetness and light.

**GEN 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;**

Abraham was weary of waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise. When would the Seed come? When would the land be inherited? God gave him some unpleasant information. It would be many long years before this took place. He would have seed. However, his seed would find themselves in a strange land which not the land of promise. They would spend some four hundred years of servitude under the rulers of that land. We know now that which Abraham did not know. That land in which they would serve for over four hundred years was the land of Egypt.

**GEN 15:14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.**

After spending that four hundred years of slavery, God would rescue them and would punish the Egyptian masters for their cruelty. Abraham's descendants would be released from bondage and would leave that land with much possessions. As we look back at the Biblical account we can see that God's prophecy came true. The Egyptians were glad to see Israel go. They gave them many goods.

**GEN 15:15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.**



Yes, Abraham would die. But he would live to a ripe old age of one hundred seventy-five. He would then quietly pass into the presence of his ancestors. Many of God's promises would be carried far beyond the life of Abraham, but they would be kept.

**GEN 15:16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.**

Men lived longer then than now. Lifespans had shortened since the time of Methusaleh and Noah, but they were still averaging over one hundred years. Thus God could speak of being in bondage to a captive nation for four generations, or for around four hundred years.

**GEN 15:17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.**

This must have been quite a sight. God manifested himself in the form of a smoking furnace and a burning lamp. Both of these passed between the divided pieces of the animals which Abraham had placed in two rows. Abraham had his request granted. He could no longer doubt that God would honor his word. Abraham would have a multitude of seed. His descendants would someday possess the land of promise.

**GEN 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:**

This was not a new covenant. It was the same covenant which had been established when the patriarch was called out of Ur of the Chaldees. We do see a little more detail now. The extent of the promised land would be from the Euphrates River in the land Abraham had left to the river of Egypt. There are two possibilities with respect to the identity of the “river of Egypt.” First, it could be the Nile. Second, it could be a smaller river that ran along the border between Palestine and Egypt. During the days of Solomon we find Israel controlling the land to that latter river.

**GEN 15:19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,**

**GEN 15:20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,**

**GEN 15:21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.**

Here are ten tribes of pagan people who were conquered by Israel as they moved into the land of Canaan under Joshua. This was not without struggle. Until the day I write these words, the Arab tribes and nations have disputed with the Jews over the territories which were taken from the above groups.

The one major theme of this entire chapter is that God had not abandoned his dual promise to Abraham that he would produce seed which would bring a blessing to all nations, and that he would cause Abraham's descendants to inherit the promised land.

We can see today that this promise extended far beyond what Abraham ever anticipated. Abraham's

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spiritual seed today are those who believe in Jesus Christ and are faithful to the Son of God. They have the promise that they will inherit the new heaven and the new earth. Let us cleave to that precious promise.

Chapter 16

GEN 16:1 **Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.**

Chapter fifteen recorded that God had established a serious covenant with Abram to the effect that Abram would have descendants as numberless as the stars in the heavens. Both Abram and Sarai must have been wondering just how this was to come about. Sarai was now past the age of childbearing. Not only did this cause concern with respect to the promise of God; it also caused shame to Sarai. Failure to bear children was much more serious in that day than it is at the time I write these comments.

I do not think Sarai had given up hope that God's promise to Abram would be kept. She simply could not see any way that she could bear any children. Therefore, she conceived a plan which would help God to carry out the promise. Her problem was a lack of patience. The book of Hebrews condemns such as weakness. Hebrews 10:35-36 states "Cast now away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Sarai had an Egyptian handmaid. The handmaid was no doubt acquired while she was still in the land of Egypt. Sarai would make a sacrifice and share her husband with Hagar in order that God's promise might be kept.

GEN 16:2 **And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may**

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**be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.**

Any child born to Hagar would be the property of Sarai. Thus Sarai felt she would be coming into the possession of children, even though not the true mother of those children.

We are not told how enthusiastically Abram received this suggestion. One is caused to wonder whether Hagar was attractive or not. It appears that he certainly had no great objection to the plan. Both Sarai and Abram were in error. Sarai was wrong in conceiving the plan. Abram was wrong in agreeing to it.

We must certainly make comparison here between the attitudes of Sarai and Eve. Both caused their husband to depart from the will of Jehovah. Eve did so knowing very well that she was being disobedient. Sarai did so in a mistaken attempt to help God along.

**GEN 16:3            And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.**

The ten years is probably mentioned to give us an idea of the amount of time which Sarai had been waiting without the joy of bearing a child.

While they were in Egypt Abram had been willing to share his wife with the Egyptian prince. Now the situation was reversed. Sarai was willing to share her husband with an Egyptian handmaid.

**GEN 16:4**      **And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.**

Looking backward from our own point of time, we can see that just such a reaction as Hagar demonstrated might have been expected. With the strong emphasis upon the importance of bearing children, Sarai had proved to be a failure. With the same man, Hagar had been successful. Even though the child would legally be the property of Sarai, the facts spoke loudly. Hagar could do what Sarai could not.

**GEN 16:5**      **And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.**

Sarai implored Abram to do something about the matter. She had tried to do what she thought was right. It had turned out to be a disaster. She laid the problem in the lap of Abram. Would God condemn her for what she had done? What would Abram propose as a solution to the difficulties?

**GEN 16:6**      **But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thine hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.**

Abram sided with Sarai. She was given his permission to treat Hagar in any way she desired. She was his wife.

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Hagar was but a handmaid. Abram could have taken a quite different attitude. He could have condemned Sarai for her inability to conceive, and praised Hagar for being capable of bringing forth his child.

Sarai decided to make life completely miserable for Hagar. Things became so serious that Hagar decided the only way to deal with it was to run away. She would run away into the wilderness. For all she knew, she would die without food. The choice, however, seemed to be better than the unbearable agony she was enduring at the hands of Sarai.

GEN 16:7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

It appears that Hagar had started back toward her native land of Egypt. The trip proved to be more than she could handle. She found a place where she could obtain a drink of water for the two of them. By this time the thought could have well crossed her mind that her bones would be found later beside the fountain.

Note that once again an angel is called “the angel of the Lord.” It is not “an” angel of the Lord, but “the” angel of the Lord. Suggestions have been abundant. Could this be Michael? Could it be Gabriel? Or could it even be a preincarnate appearance of Christ? The evidence leans toward the last of these suggestions, as we will see in just a moment.

GEN 16:8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai’s maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.



Hagar was asked two questions. Where had she started from on this journey, and where was she going? If the angel was of divine nature, he would already know the answer to both of these questions.

They would not have been asked for the purpose of learning the answer. They would have been a means of opening conversation.

Hagar indicated that she was running away from the woman whom she called her mistress. The angel would have known perfectly well why she was fleeing.

GEN 16:9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

Hagar was instructed to turn around and go back to Sarai. She was to suffer whatever misery might be directed toward her. Clearly the implication is that she would be able to bear up under whatever came her way.

GEN 16:10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

The angel of the Lord used the personal pronoun "I." Now angels do have considerable power. But this statement sounds as if it person speaking is the Lord Himself.

The promise is that if Hagar would go back, she could expect a multitude of offspring. This is most interesting. God had made a promise to Abram that his descendants



would be innumerable. Sarai and he had set out to see that this was realized. They planned for it to take place through Hagar. That was not God's plan. He would still bring his promise to pass through Sarai. But, since Abram and Sarai had set up an alternate plan, God was ready to give Abram a multitude of descendants through both Hagar and Sarai. As we shall see, the two divisions of descendants were most incompatible. This is usually the result of men's interference in the plans of the Almighty.

GEN 16:11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

Hagar was already well aware of the fact she was pregnant. The angel simply added to the information. The child would be a male. He was to be called "Ishmael", which means "God hears." God had heard of Hagar's troubles and was responding to her sorrows.

GEN 16:12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

Along with the good news that she would survive and would bear the child, she received some news of an unhappy nature. Her son would be unable to get along with others. They would fight against him, and he would fight against them. Is this prophecy limited to Ishmael alone, or does it include his descendants as well? The Arabs and the Jews have fought one another fiercely.

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The conflict has been deadly, with vast numbers of both Arabs and Jews losing their lives as a result.

The consequences of interfering in God's purposes can be extremely grave and long lasting.

**GEN 16:13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?**

Hagar was grateful to God. She knew He had been aware of her distress from the beginning. She had been blessed with the opportunity of seeing the one who had been looking after her.

**GEN 16:14 Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.**

As a result of the meeting between the angel of the Lord and Hagar, the handmaid called the well by the name Beerlahairoi which means "God sees."

**GEN 16:15 And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.**

Hagar followed the advice of the angel of the Lord. She returned to the household of Abram and Sarai. She would suffer whatever anguish came her way.

The son was born just as the angel predicted. He was given the name "Ishmael", just as the angel had instructed. Abram must have agreed with the name. We are not told Sarai's reaction to this action.





**GEN 16:16 And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.**

Abram was eighty-six years of age when Ishmael was born. Even in days when men lived through longer life spans, this would have been later in years than anyone might reasonably expect to generate offspring. In an honorable fashion, Abram was ready to accept responsibility for the rearing of Ishmael.

There are many lessons to be found in this chapter.

1. The sharing of husbands or wives is wrong.
2. Trying to speed up God's promises can be hazardous.
3. God's providence works behind the scenes in ways beyond our understanding.
4. The consequences of our actions may well extend far beyond our own lifetime.

## Chapter 17

**GEN 17:1** And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

The passage of time between the last verse of chapter sixteen and the first verse of chapter seventeen can cause a problem for the reader if he or she is not careful. Abram was eighty-six in the last verse of chapter sixteen. The present verse informs us he was ninety-nine. Thus, thirteen years had passed by. Ishmael was about to reach the years of puberty. It is likely that Abram and Sarai had settled into a routine in which they accepted Ishmael as the individual through whom God would keep the promise to Abram that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed.

I have long wondered just how the Lord appeared to various individuals in times of old. Did they actually see Him, or did they only hear Him. Did they hear an audible voice? If so, what was the nature of that voice? All we know in the present case is that God appeared to Abram and spoke to him.

The Hebrew is “El Shaddai.” The term means “Mighty God.” He is, of course, the Only True and Living God. He is the one who keeps his promises. Abram will be reminded of this.

Since the Lord is the Mighty God Abram, as well as all other humans, had the responsibility to strive toward perfection. Jesus Christ commanded men to “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. It is true that all men sin and come short of the glory of God. However, that does not remove the goal for which Jehovah expects men to strive. Abram was to strive for perfection.



**GEN 17:2      And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.**

The covenant had already been introduced to Abram, as recorded in chapters twelve and thirteen of this book. God is now providing more information as to what he was to do for Abram and his seed, and what he expected Abram and his descendants to do in His service.

God made it clear that He had not forgotten his promise to Abram that his seed would be as numerous as the stars of the heaven, or the sand on the seashore.

**GEN 17:3      And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,**

Abram struck a posture of humility. The proper relationship between God and those whom He has created in His image is that of Deity and worshipper. Abram demonstrated his realization of that relationship.

Jehovah honored Abram's humble attitude with a willingness to give him further information.

**GEN 17:4      As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.**

There are at least two parties in any covenant. In the present case, the two parties are Jehovah and Abram. Jehovah would explain what He would do to honor the covenant, and He would tell Abram what was expected of him and his seed. In verse four Abram is informed that he will be a father of many nations. Note that we have the plural used here. Abram was not just to be father of the Jewish nation. He was to be father of many nations. The Lord was looking beyond the time when

the fleshly Jews alone were the chosen people. He was anticipating the time when Gentile nations would be invited to the fold.

**GEN 17:5      Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.**

God gave several names to persons in this chapter. He gave Abram a new name. He gave Sarai a new name, and he provided the name Isaac for Abram's son to be. The name Abraham means "Father of a multitude." Truly God's promise has been kept. Abraham is the fleshly ancestor of both the Jews and the Arabs. He is also the spiritual Father of every person who has come to God through Christ, the seed of Abraham. Yes, God's use of the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea is a correct picture.

From this verse on, we will find that the term Abram is no longer applied to this man. He is now Abraham.

**GEN 17:6      And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.**

We have added information here. Kings were to come from Abram. His descendants would not only include common men; there were to be royalty involved. This was fulfilled in a number of kings such as Saul, David and Solomon, etc. It is most surely fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of Lord and King of kings.

**GEN 17:7      And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.**



God would keep his part of the covenant to the end of time. Abraham was to be the father of the faithful. The fleshly Jew would be replaced by the spiritual Jew. When both are considered, God would honor His commitment to Abraham until time melts away into eternity. The seed who would receive the promise would be from many nations.

**GEN 17:8      And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.**

The land of Canaan would forever belong to the seed of Abraham. God is the true owner of Canaan. The century long conflict between the Jews and the Arabs over the possession of Canaan is fruitless. The land of Canaan belonged to Abraham's fleshly descendants until the time of Christ. Now it belongs to the spiritual descendants of Abraham. Every true Christian today inherits the land of Canaan, for Jehovah is our Father, and He is the true owner.

However, we must go further. We are told "Blessed are the faithful, for they shall inherit the earth." It is not just the land of Canaan which belongs to the children of God today. It is the entire earth. There is not a square mile upon this globe that does not belong to the children of God, who are the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

**GEN 17:9      And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.**

The promise of God toward Abraham and his seed was conditional. If Abraham's seed remained true to



the commands of the Lord, He would in turn keep his promises to them. If they refused to keep God's commands, He would turn His face away from them.

**GEN 17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.**

A basic beginning point for the keeping of God's commands was the rite of circumcision. Every male child of Abraham's descendants was to undergo this operation. It was to begin with Abraham and was to continue forever.

I would point out, however, that circumcision took on a new meaning with the coming of Christ and His church. Circumcision changed from circumcision of the flesh to circumcision of the heart. The apostle Paul told the Romans and also the Colossians that there is a circumcision which is made without hands. It is a circumcision of the heart rather than of the flesh. See Colossians 2:11 and the second chapter of Romans. Paul explained that the Jew today is the one who is circumcised of heart in the Spirit.

**GEN 17:11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.**

Why did God choose to mark His people by having the males circumcised? Why did He not choose some other token, or sign, of dedication to Him? There are several possibilities. I think the most plausible of them is that the male reproductive organ is the instrument through which the multitude of descendants promised to



Abraham would be brought into existence. Every time a mother observed the circumcision of her child, she was reminded that the child was to be dedicated to the service and honor of God. Every time that a wife observed the circumcision of her husband, she would be reminded that she was married to a man who had been committed to God's service. And every time a man observed his own circumcision, he could remember that he was expected to live his life in harmony with the will of Jehovah.

Some would stop here. They would overlook the public nature of circumcision. If one refused to be circumcised, he was to be cut off from the people of God. The only way others could know whether or not one was circumcised was to be told or to have seen the individual. Thus, circumcision was not just a token to the man, to his wife and to his parents. It was a sign to anyone who became aware of his condition.

**GEN 17:12      And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.**

The circumcision was to take place on the eighth day of the male child's life. We are informed that there is a best time for circumcision as far as the tendency toward bleeding is concerned. There is less bleeding when circumcision is done on that day than if it is done earlier or later.

Obviously, many were circumcised at other times of life in this first ceremony. Abraham was an elderly man. There would have been many others who were of various ages. Nevertheless, from that time on, the operation was to be done on the eighth day, or the first day of the second week of life.



Not only were those who were actually the fleshly relatives of Abraham to be circumcised. Everyone who became a member of his household was to submit to the ceremony. The servants who were purchased by Abraham or his descendants were to honor this command of God.

Right here we need to note some similarities and differences with respect to circumcision and baptism. Christian baptism is the ceremony which takes one over the doorsill of the family of God. It is done voluntarily after one has heard the gospel, believed it and has repented of sin. The rite of circumcision was performed on babes eight days old. It was not a matter of choice. It was not a prerequisite to the remission of sin, since the eight day old babe was still innocent.

I would add here that the Arabic descendants of Ishmael circumcise on the thirteenth birthday since that is the time at which their spiritual ancestor was circumcised.

**GEN 17:13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.**

If the Jews had kept the covenant of circumcision with all the attendant commands, God would have made it a perpetual agreement. The problem is that the Jews greatly disappointed God by going whoring after other gods and ignoring His own instructions. Thus, He cast them out of the land of Canaan and through Jesus Christ He brought the new covenant or New Testament into being.

**GEN 17:14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised,**

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that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Either the individual who would not be circumcised, or the people as a whole, who failed to honor God's will, would be driven from the land and disinherited as God's children.

GEN 17:15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

The name "Sarah" means "Princess." A princess is a part of a royal family. Sarah was to be a part of the royal family of God. She, along with her husband, Abraham, would bring kings and princes into existence. May I remind you that Christians today are a "Royal Priesthood."

GEN 17:16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

It had not been Abraham's desire that the promised seed through which all nations were one day to be blessed come through his handmaid, Hagar. He had intensely desired that Sarah be the mother of that child. Now, after having received a son through Hagar, God was promising that his former desire would be fulfilled.

Just as Abraham was to be the father of a multitude, Sarah was to be a mother of nations. Again we note that the word is plural. It is to be more than one nation to whom Sarah will be a mother. Yes, she could truly be called a "Princess" for there would be kings of the people among her progeny.



GEN 17:17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

Abraham's response to this news from Jehovah is an interesting mixture of actions. He fell on his face, as we might expect him to do in the presence of the Lord. But, at the same time he laughed at what he considered the impossibility of what he had just heard.

Sarah was ninety years of age. He was ninety-nine. He would one hundred years old before a child could be produced according to the time of women. I think we can appreciate his hesitation in believing what he had heard. It is common among men to be shortsighted with respect to the power and wisdom of God. Abraham should have been prepared by this time to accept any statement God made. He was too much like the rest of us. He did not fully understand God's nature.

There are many who say Abraham laughed in joy rather than in doubt. God did not rebuke Abraham, as he did Sarah when she laughed. I deny that his laugh was that of joy. The statement in this next verse 18 proves that he did not believe Sarah could have a child. He desired that Ishmael might fulfil God's promise.

GEN 17:18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

It was quite understandable that Abraham would make this statement. For thirteen years both he and Sarah had accepted Ishmael as the hope God had given back in chapter twelve. It had not been easy for either Sarah or himself to make the adjustment required in treating Ishmael as the promised child. Now he was in the position of having to reverse his feelings and look for another child.



GEN 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Regardless of the difficulties involved, God restated his position. Sarah would give Abraham a son. God was so sure that he even instructed Abraham as to the name which was to be given to the child. The name was to be Isaac. The word "Isaac" means "laughter."

It was Isaac through whom the covenant was to be kept, not Ishmael. Sarah was to be the mother of nations, not Hagar. Just as Abraham was to be the father of both fleshly Israel and spiritual Israel, Sarah was to be the mother of both. The covenant would be everlasting in that when God cast off Israel because of their sins, He would make a new and better covenant with those of many nations who would accept Him as their God and obey Him as his people.

GEN 17:20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

Abraham's plea had not gone unnoticed. God was ready to respond positively to the request that Ishmael become the father of a multitude of people. Isaac's son Jacob became the father of twelve princes. Ishmael became the father of twelve princes.

However; men sometimes get more than they ask for when they pray. God did keep his promise. Ishmael has become the ancestor of the Arab people. They have



been in conflict with the Jews throughout the centuries. As we draw toward the close of the twentieth century, the hatred between the Jews and the Arabs is just as vicious as it has ever been.

GEN 17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

God's ways and thoughts are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. It was God's plan that the covenant be kept through Isaac and not through Ishmael.

I find it interesting that although Sarah and Abraham lived to be much older than people do today, the time of pregnancy appears to be less than a year. With the longer life span, one might think there would be a longer period of pregnancy.

GEN 17:22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

God had made His position absolutely clear. There was no reason for further discussion. Abraham was expected to accept the will of Jehovah and comply with it.

GEN 17:23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

Abraham was the "father of the faithful." He immediately set out to conform to God's instructions.



The very same day he saw to it that his son Ishmael, as well as all other males in his household were circumcised precisely as God had specified. From this point on, the males were to be circumcised on the eighth day of their life. But at this time they were obviously of a variety of ages.

Chapter 18

GEN 18:1 **And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;**

It is likely that there was only a small amount of time which had passed by since the events of the previous chapter.

Abraham is pasturing his flocks and herds in the area overlooking Sodom and Gomorrah. He had given his nephew Lot the choice of territory in days past. Lot had chosen the well watered plains and the city of Sodom. Abraham had taken the higher land nearby.

It is the middle of the day and the heat is oppressive. As Abraham surveyed the scene before his eyes he saw the LORD. We have reason to believe this was a type of incarnation somewhat similar to that which took place when Jesus became flesh and dwelt with men. as described in John 1:1-3.

GEN 18:2 **And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,**

Note that we are not told Abraham saw these three men walking toward him, or riding in a chariot. Nor are we told they were a vision. They appeared suddenly and they seem to have appeared in fleshly bodies.

Certain religious groups use this portion of scripture as evidence for the existence of the trinity. They see the three as corresponding to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This seems to be stretching the point a bit. We will see later that only one of the three has the

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characteristics of divinity. The other two are no doubt angels.

Abraham ran to meet them and bowed himself to the earth. This was not necessarily an indication that he saw any of the three as divine at that point. Bowing low toward another person is simply a matter of courtesy and respect. Westerners are more apt to shake hands. In the east bowing low has similar meaning.

**GEN 18:3     And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:**

Abraham was only demonstrating hospitality. He invited the three to stay with him for a while. He would do everything he could to make them comfortable.

He does use the singular term “Lord.” He also referred to himself as a servant. In a similar way, we today might well indicate that we were “at your service.” We would do well to compare Hebrews 13:2 with the present scene. It appears that this is the set of events referred to when we are told that some had entertained strangers unaware.

**GEN 18:4     Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:**

The washing of feet was an important part of hospitality at that time, and in that place. Sandals were worn. The dusty paths caused the feet of a traveler to become covered with a layer of dirt. We recall Jesus washing the feet of the apostles as a means of demonstrating the need for men to show humility. The three were invited to sit in the shade of a nearby tree.



They would be both rested and refreshed.

**GEN 18:5**     **And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.**

In addition, Abraham offered to prepare them a meal. Only after they had eaten and rested were they to pass onward in their journey. The three agreed to accept Abraham's generous offer.

**GEN 18:6**     **And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.**

Though Abraham and Sarah had servants, Abraham went into his tent and requested that Sarah begin the preparation of some cakes of bread. She was to use three measures of meal. A measure was equal to about a gallon. This was to be a plenteous serving!

**GEN 18:7**     **And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.**

While Sarah was getting the cakes of bread ready, Abraham went to the herd of cattle and brought a young calf. He commanded a servant to dress it. My wife has suggested that this required some degree of organization. It would take some time to dress and cook the calf. The bread would be done well before the calf was ready unless Sarah planned carefully.





**GEN 18:8** And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

This meal is revealing. Abraham clearly desired to place the best he had before the three visitors. In doing so, he used butter which is a product of cattle. He used milk, which is a product of cattle, and he used the meat from a calf. Some people in the eastern countries would not eat beef, considering cattle to be sacred. It was not so with Abraham. Beef and beef products were a staple part of his diet.

The meal was consumed under the shade of a tree to avoid the heat which was beating down upon them in the middle of the day.

**GEN 18:9** And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

The three wished to present a message to Sarah. She had been out of sight thus far. They asked where they could find her. Abraham quickly replied that she was within the tent.

**GEN 18:10** And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

Although there has been a number of mentions of three individual up to this point, we now find one of the three taking a foremost position. He says “I” will return and Sarah will have a son according to the time of life. The time of life would of course be the normal pregnancy period.

Sarah just happened to hear what the visitor had said from her position in the tent door. Was this a matter of eavesdropping, or was Sarah justified in listening in? After all, she had prepared the bread for the meal.

**GEN 18:11**     **Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.**

When a woman is ninety years of age she does not expect to give birth to a child. In addition, Sarah had been barren even when she was young. How ridiculous to think she would now produce a son when she had tried so hard before.

**GEN 18:12**     **Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?**

Sarah laughed to herself at the impossibility of such a thing taking place. She did not laugh out loud. She would be more polite than to do that.

**GEN 18:13**     **And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?**

The LORD who spoke here was divine. He knew Sarah had laughed private, even though she had not intended to be heard. He demanded to know why she had thought it ridiculous for God to give her a son.

Dear reader, there are many times in our lives when each of us wonder just how God can keep some of the promises He has made to us. Faith does not come from human reason alone. Faith comes by hearing and responding to the Word of God.



**GEN 18:14** Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Matthew, the gospel writer, has provided us with the answer to this simple question. "With God, all things are possible." Cannot the one who created the heavens and the earth cause a woman past the age of childbearing to give birth. Certainly!

The promise was then repeated once more.

**GEN 18:15** Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

Sarah still did not find herself able to accept the good news as she should have. However; she was afraid that her laughter had gotten her into trouble. She was informed that in spite of her laughter, she was to become a mother.

**GEN 18:16** And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

The angels had two purposes. They were to restate the promise to Sarah that she would bear a son; but they also had a mission to enter into Sodom and examine the degree of corruption in that evil city. They had accomplished the first of the tasks. Now they moved on to the second.

Abraham continued to demonstrate his hospitality in accompanying the two as they approached Sodom.



**GEN 18:17    And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;**

Abraham was known as the “friend of God.” Friends confide in one another. Jehovah decided that it was only right that he allow Abraham to know what lay ahead for the city in which Lot and his family had made their home.

**GEN 18:18    Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?**

There was good reason for revealing this information to Abraham. The destruction of Sodom might have stricken terror into the heart of this faithful man. God wanted him forewarned in order that he might progress steadily toward his role in being made a blessing to every nation on earth. Abraham’s future would be far different than those of the city of Sodom.

**GEN 18:19    For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.**

God knows the end from the beginning. He knew the strength of character of his friend Abraham. Abraham would provide the finest of training for his children. This would enable his line to pass on righteous characteristics to Isaac, Jacob, David and even to the Christ himself. Yes every nation was to be blessed through the descendants of Abraham.



**GEN 18:20** And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

Many in this wide world have the mistaken belief that their sins are hidden. Nothing could be farther from the truth. God sees. God hears. God responds. The wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah had sent up its foul smell all the way to heaven itself. God was sending his angels to search the matter out.

**GEN 18:21** I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

Through the angels, God went down into the city. The evidence would become exceedingly clear as to just how wicked the citizens of Sodom had become.

**GEN 18:22** And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

The persons are called men in this verse because that is the form the angels had taken. To all outward appearances they were normal men.

As the two moved away from them, the one who had been called “LORD” remained behind with Abraham. By this time he had revealed to Abraham what was about to take place.

**GEN 18:23** And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?



Abraham began to plead for the people of Sodom. It would certainly not be like God to destroy righteous persons just because they happened to be in the same city as wicked ones.

We cannot help but think that Abraham was particularly concerned about his nephew Lot and his family. He must have felt that his intercession would persuade the Lord to save his loved ones, as well as others who might be present.

**GEN 18:24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?**

Perhaps Abraham remembered such promises from the Lord as “The fathers shall not die for the sins of the sons, and the sons shall not die for the sins of their fathers. Every man shall die for his own sins.”

**GEN 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**

Now it had become very clear that this person Abraham was talking with was God himself. Only God is the Judge of all the earth. Abraham cannot believe the Righteous Judge would slay righteous men alongside of those who were evil.

**GEN 18:26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.**



The weakness in Abraham's thinking was that he did not know just how wicked Sodom was. God did know. There were not fifty righteous persons in the entire city.

**GEN 18:27** And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

Abraham realized the vast difference in his own wisdom and that of Jehovah. He would not be brash and continue his plea because he was so knowledgeable. He admitted his inferiority. Yet he presented his petition once more.

**GEN 18:28** Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

Surely five persons would not make that much difference. If God was willing to spare the city for fifty, would it not be proper for him to save it for just five less?

God agreed to Abraham's plea.

**GEN 18:29** And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

Abraham was very persistent. Things had gone well thus far. He would try forty. Again the Lord agreed. How many times have we heard the expression that someone "Jewed down" the price of something which was for sale.



It is not impossible that the term arose as a result of this episode between Abraham and the Lord.

**GEN 18:30** And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

Surely one would expect to find thirty righteous persons in an entire city. Abraham tried once more. God knew very well there would not be thirty.

**GEN 18:31** And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

It was now getting down close to the number of relatives Abraham had within the city of Sodom. Twenty left very few more than the immediate family of this great man.

**GEN 18:32** And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

We must suspect that Abraham was becoming very fearful at this point. If we count the number of close relatives we find there were: Lot and his wife. There were two sons. There were two married daughters with their husbands, and there were two unmarried daughters. This makes a total of ten.

Perhaps that is the reason Abraham stopped his

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pleading with the number ten rather than continuing on down to one righteous person.

GEN 18:33 **And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.**

The Lord agreed to spare the city for ten righteous. Sadly, the number was too high.

Chapter 19

GEN 19:1 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

There were three angels who had appeared to Abraham when the patriarch pleaded for the city of Sodom. It was apparent at that time that one of these angels was more important than the other two. The other two moved down from the highlands above the city into the city itself. Their purpose was to determine just how wicked the city was, and to destroy it if there were less than ten righteous persons found there.

As they approached the city, Lot was sitting at the gate of the city. Most of the commentators conclude that this means Lot was in a position of influence. Abraham, Lot's uncle, had rescued Sodom from its enemies and had brought Lot back not long before that. That may be true. However, your present author has lived in Tennessee long enough that he easily remembers there were two reasons for men to gather at the courthouse. Some were there to do the lawmaking. Others just sat around in idle talk and whittling. We do not know which of these was true of Lot.

When Lot saw the angels coming, he rose to his feet and bowed his face toward the ground. Such actions are more common in that part of the world than in some other areas. Handshakes are a bit mild forms of greeting for the people of Lot's time and place. We are not told why Lot is the only one mentioned as having paid the visitors such honor.



GEN 19:2 And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

Hospitality in general is more over there than in other places. In fact the New Testament instructs us to be hospital to strangers, because some have entertained angels unawares.

Lot invited the guests of the city to come to his house. They could wash their feet, which would have been dirty from walking in sandals. They could rest and resume their travels the next morning. The response was negative. Strangely, the visitors declined to stay with Lot. They would spend the night in the street of the city. The events which follow prove that abiding in the street would have been a very dangerous choice.

This probably indicates they were not only ready to test the sincerity of Lot's invitation. They were also ready to prove the horrible wickedness of Sodom.

GEN 19:3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

Lot meant what he said. He did not take no for an answer. He insisted that they stay in his home through the night. He even went so far as to provide a meal for nourishment. We must note that the meal would not have been a gourmet dish in terms of western diet. It consisted of unleavened bread. Some commentators see a connection between the New Testament teaching about the leavening influence of wickedness and the fact that

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the meal Lot served did not have leaven. The connection may be more perceived than real.

**GEN 19:4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:**

After the visitors had finished their meal, the men of Sodom began to surround Lot's home. They came from all parts of the city and the mob included both young and old. This was not an isolated case. It proves that the wickedness of Sodom had completely saturated the community.

The old men, as well as the young, were involved in the foul plans. Lust dims as age moves forward. It had not dimmed to the point that these older men did not have an interest in what was to be demanded.

**GEN 19:5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.**

If Lot had truly had any influence at the gates of the city with respect to lawmaking, etc. that influence does not show itself in the arrogance of the men who were crying out for him to expel the men from his house.

The word "know" in this verse refers to sexual knowledge. They were not desiring to become acquainted with Lot's visitors. They wished to have sexual intercourse with them. Quite obviously the mob did not care whether the actions were to be willing or unwilling. Without doubt, if these had been ordinary men, the results of the



demands would have been rape, resulting in murder.

**GEN 19:6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,**

Lot moved outside his house and shut the door, leaving the men inside. He then proceeded to attempt reasoning with the mob to protect his guests.

**GEN 19:7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.**

Whether or not the men of the city knew how wicked their plans were, Lot knew. He pleaded with them not to carry out that which they had in mind. He still had some remnant of morality, even after having lived in such a city for some time. Peter refers to Lot as a righteous man who was distressed by the wickedness of those around him.

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.

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Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

GEN 19:8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

Lot then decided to cure one sin by committing another. It seems inconceivable that he would make the suggestion which he made. He proposed to deliver his own two virgin daughters who had never been married to the men of the city. They could then visit their ungodly plans upon his daughters rather than upon his visitors.

It is hard to see how Peter could refer to Lot as a righteous man when Lot would make a proposal such as he made. The only possible explanation is that Peter was comparing Lot to the totally corrupt men who lived in Sodom.

Lot may have had some idea by this time that his visitors were more than normal men. Would he have pleaded for them so insistently if he was just trying to protect sojourners who had by chance come to his house? If he did not realize his guests were different, it would not be long before he would do so.

GEN 19:9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.



The howling mob left no doubt about their determination. Lot was warned to stand back. After all, they said, This man Lot is not really one of us. He came to us as a stranger. Now he thinks he can judge us and press his own set of values upon us.

This reminds one of what is taking place in the day in which I write these words. If a Christian speaks out against the sins of homosexuality and other forms of fornication, those who practice such things demand to know what right the Christian has to dictate their life style.

At this point, the men were quite ready to take Lot, along with the two guests. They would abuse all three of them. They moved forward, fully intending to break down the door of the house and take the guests.

GEN 19:10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

Lot's guests quickly took action. They first opened the door which Lot had shut behind him. They saw to it that Lot was safely inside, and then shut the door to keep the evil men outside.

GEN 19:11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

The next step was to strike the wicked mob with blindness so they could not even find the door to open it. It has been said that "There are none so blind as those who will not see." Here were men who would not see! God



saw fit to deal them a punishment that fit their crime.

GEN 19:12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

It must have been perfectly clear to Lot by this time that his two visitors were of supernatural character. When they made a suggestion he would do well to fall in line with it. His safety and that of his family would depend upon his compliance.

The angels asked Lot if he had kinspeople in Sodom. If so he needed to warn them to flee from Sodom. It would not be safe to remain there.

Lot had at least four daughters. There were the two virgin daughters mentioned just previously. There were at least two married daughters. Verse fourteen speaks of sons in law. There were also sons, and quite likely they also were married. The ten for which Abraham begged God to save the city might have come very close to the number of relatives Lot had in Sodom.

GEN 19:13 For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

The eyes of the Lord travel to and fro upon the face of the earth constantly evaluating the conditions of mankind.

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of

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them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars (2 Chr. 16:9).

The face of the Lord is against them that do wickedness. Sodom had proven to be against God. Therefore, God had sent the angels to see that Sodom was destroyed. The destruction of Sodom is typical of that which will take place when the end time comes and God's wrath is poured out upon those who fight against Him. Notice Jude 7 and Revelation 11:8

Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Revelation 11:8 is talking about Babylon. Christ was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem. In the end time, spiritual Babylon will be destroyed for it's rebellion just as Sodom was destroyed and just as Egypt was riddled with the ten plagues.

**GEN 19:14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.**

Lot took the instructions of the angels with dead seriousness. He spoke to his kinsfolk and warned them



the city was to be left in ruins. The warning made no impression whatsoever. They only mocked him as being full of hot air.

God's commandments usually are received as foolishness by those who prefer being children of the Devil. Any warnings sent their direction are ignored.

**GEN 19:15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.**

At daybreak the angels hustled Lot, Lot's wife, and his two virgin daughters toward a safer place. Again they warned that if any remained in the city of Sodom they meet death.

Any today who ignore the warnings of the Word of God to find safer ground will ultimately meet eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord.

The two daughters who "are here" is in contrast to the others who were married to Lot's sons in law.

**GEN 19:16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.**

It was apparently not easy for Lot to leave Sodom. He dallied some. The angels took he, his wife, and his two daughters by the hand and led them from the city. It would not be long before disaster arrived. For Abraham's sake, God was protecting his nephew.

**GEN 19:17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape**

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for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

There is an interesting change from the plural to the singular here. There are two angels. Yet it says “he” spoke with them. I take it that one of the two did the speaking.

Lot was plainly told he must not long for that which was being left behind. His life depended upon escaping to the mountain territory above the city. He was not even to remain in the plains country in which Sodom was located. The reader will recall that Lot chose the well watered plains of the Jordan when he was making his agreement with Abraham some time before this.

GEN 19:18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my LORD:

What a terrifying thought! Must he completely leave all of the prosperity of the plains for the ruggedness of life in the mountains. Surely that must not be true.

There are many large cities with much wealth and many conveniences in the world today. In too many of those cities one can find the same types of sin that existed in Sodom. Many a country boy has been corrupted by city lights and pleasures of the night.

GEN 19:19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

Lot has a suggestion. Among the cities of the plain, there was one little one called Zoar. (The name Zoar means little one.) If God had been so gracious as to save Lot's life, perhaps he would enrich it to a slight degree by allowing him to continue life in a village instead of the larger community of Sodom.

Life in the caves of the mountain area was nearly unthinkable.

GEN 19:20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

Zoar was not too far away. Would God allow Lot and his companions to stop and abide there rather than risk life in the mountains? At least life would still have some meaning! It would not just be a case of mere existence.

GEN 19:21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

The Lord agreed to Lot's request. He would allow him to go to Zoar. He would not overthrow Zoar with the other cities of the plain. One must wonder if God did not know exactly what would take place in Zoar that would result in Lot moving with his family to the mountain area later.

GEN 19:22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Lot must hurry. The coming destruction would



be postponed until he and his family had removed themselves from Sodom.

GEN 19:23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

It had been daybreak when this conversation began. Now the sun had risen and day was fully upon them. What a night had just passed! What a cataclysm was about to come!

GEN 19:24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

All sorts of explanations have been proposed as to the manner in which God destroyed the wicked city. God could have used natural means such as volcanic action and lightning. He also could have used miraculous means. The important point is that Sodom and some of the other cities were burned up at the command of God; and that they were burned up because of their wickedness.

GEN 19:25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

Did God overthrow the cities in the sense of turning the earth upside down through earthquakes? What were the details of the destruction? It is best not to speculate beyond what has been revealed. Sodom was to be left a smoking ruin.

GEN 19:26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.



We were told that Lot lingered. Now we are told that his wife looked back from behind him. Neither of the two were very happy about the necessity of leaving the city behind. Let me remind you of what Jesus had to say about the destruction of Jerusalem and of the return of Christ in judgment in the end of the world.

Luke 17:31-32 <In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.> <Remember Lot's wife.>

It seems that Lot's wife was not simply glancing back for a fleeting last look. She was longing to go back to what she had left behind. She was left standing in the plains. She became a pillar of salt.

Let the Christian beware. After one has left the world to follow Christ, it is folly to look back and long for the pleasures of this world. There are far worse things than becoming a pillar of salt.

GEN 19:27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

Since Abraham got up early in the morning to view the ruins of Sodom, we must conclude that this was the day following the overthrow. The sun had risen and day was full before the wrath was pour out. After a full night of burning, Abraham gazed toward what had once been the luxurious city of the plains.

GEN 19:28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.



As Abraham looked across the plains the entire countryside was smoking ashes. Remember now that Abraham had chosen the hill country and allowed Lot to move into the plains. It must have crossed his mind that his choice was the better of the two.

GEN 19:29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

God had remembered the plea of Abraham that the righteous not be destroyed with the wicked. Although Lot was not a model of purity, he was a refreshing contrast to the soul sickness of the wicked men who had been burned up.

GEN 19:30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

Many times there are questions that arise from the scriptures that do not have satisfying answers. One of those questions shows up here. If Lot was so insistent that he be allowed to live in Zoar, why did he then move himself and his two daughters to the mountains where he had been told to go in the first place? Living in a cave which was accessible to wild animals is just what he had feared when he was told to go there.

I will venture a guess as to why Lot feared to dwell in Zoar, even after he was given permission by the Lord. The citizens of Zoar could see the destruction

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which surrounded them. They also could connect that destruction with the presence of Lot and his family in Sodom. It seems highly probable that the people of Zoar informed Lot that they wanted no part of him in their city. For his own safety, it would have been wise to depart.

At any rate, he and his two daughters found themselves living in a cave.

**GEN 19:31 And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:**

The older of the two daughters saw a dim future. She had not married. She had no children. How shameful it would be if she lived her entire life and never bore a child.

Do not make the mistake of thinking she believed the entire world had been depopulated and that she and her sister were the only hope for propagating the human race. She had lived in Zoar and knew there were men there. However, she did not relish the idea of having neither a husband or a child for the remainder of her life while she lived in a cave. When she got old would there be anyone to care for her?

**GEN 19:32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.**

She came up with an answer. It was precisely the kind of an answer we might expect from someone who had been raised in the midst of such evil as existed in



Sodom. There was a man present. What did it matter that it was her own father? He could beget a child just as well as any other man. We shrink back in horror at the very thought. For one who had been exposed to the wickedness she had experienced, it likely seemed less preposterous.

But how could she accomplish her purpose? Her father would no doubt object to any such plan. This means she did know it was wrong. Otherwise it would not be necessary to make Lot drunk in order to use him in this manner.

**GEN 19:33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.**

We do not know how many possessions the family removed from Sodom or from Zoar. It does not look likely that there were many stashed away in the cave in which they were living. Nevertheless, they had found time and room for intoxicating liquor. They had gotten out of Sodom. They had not gotten Sodom out of themselves.

**GEN 19:34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.**

The younger followed the elder. It was a terrible sin that the older daughter committed in getting her father drunk and lying carnally with him. It only compounded the sin when she persuaded her younger sister to do the same the following night. Preserving seed for the

family name was far from justification for what had been done.

This is not the only time liquor has been responsible for sexual sins of every stripe and shape. Lot is not the only man who has impregnated his own daughter. Usually it is a drunk father who still retains enough of his senses to know very well just what he is doing.

**GEN 19:35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.**

Two virgin women who had retained their purity through the years of their youth had sacrificed that purity at the altar of Satan and liquor.

**GEN 19:36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.**

The plan was executed as designed. Both of Lot's daughters would bear a son to their own father. What was Lot's attitude when he found out what had taken place? Did he accept the two sons as legitimate offspring? Did he do his best to raise them in the fear of God? In view of what happened in the future of both family lines, the answers do not seem to be positive. The results were much sorrow and pain.

**GEN 19:37 And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.**

The names of the two sons born to the daughters

of Lot's are meaningful. The son of the older daughter was called Moab. The name means "from a father." Truly Moab was from her father. The descendants of Moab became one of the most persistent enemies of the Israelites. It was the king of Moab who hired Balaam to curse Israel. The Moabites were known for being worshippers of idols, particularly Baal.

Not every Moabite was hostile to Israel. Ruth, the ancestor of Jesus Christ, was a Moabite.

**GEN 19:38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.**

The son of the younger daughter was named Benammi. The name means "son of my kinsman." Since her father was as close a kinsman as one could get, the name of her son was also quite correct. The Ammonites were also enemies of Israel. They were worshippers of the god "Molech" to whom his subjects sent their babies through the fire. A giant idol with its belly full of hot coals received these babies as burnt sacrifices.

I must say that I did not enjoy studying or writing on this chapter of Genesis. Some of the things mentioned are so distasteful one is actually made sick in meditating on them. After writing on the first eighteen chapters, I had put this chapter aside and only came back to it due to the pressure of trying to complete the discussion of the entire book. It is now finished and I look forward to more lofty themes in the chapters to come.



## *Chapter 20*

**GEN 20:1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.**

We are not told how long it was after Abraham witnessed the smoking ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah that this journey took place. We do know that Abraham is referred to in Hebrews 11:8-9 as having been a sojourner in the land of promise and that he went out by faith, not knowing whither he went.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Abraham is thus used as a type of our sojourning on earth while waiting for our permanent home in heaven. Apparently Abraham spent the majority of his life moving from place to place.

Verse 1 of our present chapter says Abraham journeyed from thence to the southland. It is easy to become confused here and think of him as moving from the area of Sodom and Gomorrah to a location south of that. This was not the case. Sodom and Gomorrah were located at the very south end of the Dead Sea. This puts one about as far southward as one can go in the land of Canaan.

What is meant is that Abraham moved from the area of Sodom and Gomorrah to the south part of the

land of Canaan. Beersheba, Hebron and Gerar are all located in this general vicinity. He was actually going west from the Dead Sea, but he was moving into the southern portion of the promised land. Gerar was about five miles from the southern border, and nearly as far west as one could go and still be in Canaan. This was the land of the Philistines.

**GEN 20:2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.**

Abraham may be called the “father of the faithful”, but there were occasions when his faith left much to be desired. He should have learned his lesson previously in the land of Egypt when he told this same lie about Sarah. He got into serious trouble then. He was about to do the same thing again.

Before we become too critical of this great man of God perhaps we should take a good close look at our own lives and see whether or not each of us has not fallen repeatedly into the same sin.

As was pointed out in our discussion of the case where he told Pharaoh Sarah was his sister, the statement was partly true. She was his half sister. At the same time, we must recognize that a lie is that which is told with the intent to deceive. According to that definition, Abraham lied.

There is some question as to why Abimelech, the king of Gerar took Sarah. It seems that Sarah was approximately ninety years old at the time. She was beyond the child bearing years. Very few women who have passed the child bearing years would be so beautiful as to compete for the attentions of a king who was seeking to stimulate his fleshly desires. It would seem that he

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would have had access to a bevy of beauties within his harem.

One suggestion which has been made is that Abimelech did not take Sarah because of any sexual attractions, but that by doing this he might create a relationship with Abraham that would enlarge his power base. This argument does not seem logical in that God told Abimelech to stay away from her because she was another man's wife. Could it be that not only her child bearing ability was refreshed, but that her general appearance was rejuvenated as God prepared for the birth of Isaac?

GEN 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

I wonder how many times we are told in the holy scriptures that God spoke to one of his servants. We are left without specifics in a host of these messages. We must be satisfied with the statement that the "secret things belong to God."

In what sense was God telling Abimelech he was a "dead man?" Was He saying that he had caused Abimelech to become impotent and unable to bring forth a child? Or was he perhaps telling Abimelech he would be subject to some type of disease which would result in his death? I personally believe God was informing Abimelech he would be unable to complete any sexual relationship with Sarah. This would protect Sarah's position as the future mother of Isaac who was to be in the genealogical line of the Messiah.

GEN 20:4 But Abimelech had not come near her:



and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

Abimelech had not taken Sarah as a sexual companion. He was very much concerned that he and his people were going to be punished by extinction. Would God really cause him, and those over whom he ruled, to be unable to reproduce because of something he had done without realizing it's seriousness?

GEN 20:5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

Abraham was not alone in the deception. He and Sarah had agreed some time before this that both of them would tell the same story. We do know they did this before in Egypt. We do not know how many other times they did the same thing without it being recorded in the Bible.

Abimelech pleaded that he would not have taken Sarah for himself if he had known she was married to Abraham. If he had known the truth he would not have acted as he did.

GEN 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Abimelech was not telling God something God did not already know. He spoke to Abimelech again. This time



we are told it was in a dream. If this was a continuation of the same conversation we do know something about the manner of the revelation. We still do not know all of the specifics, such as whether or not Abimelech saw anything, or just heard a voice speaking to him.

Whatever the case, God prevented Abimelech from completing any relationship with her. This may have been through rendering Abimelech impotent, or it could also have been through providential means such as keeping him busy with other matters.

GEN 20:7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

At this juncture, God made himself absolutely clear as to what Abimelech's future course of action must be. He must give Abraham back his wife. If he would do that he might expect Abraham to pray that his problems and those of his people would be erased. Abraham had a special communion with God and God would hear his prayer.

GEN 20:8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

It seems that Abimelech had difficulty waiting until his people arose in the morning after the dream had occurred. He told his servants and the fear of God fell upon them. It was not just Abimelech who had been made as a "dead man." All of the people were in a similar



condition. They were ready to take whatever action was necessary to restore their health.

GEN 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

Abimelech called the man of God and began to chastise him. What a shame. Children of God should be living such lives that they can shame the world for it's unholy words and deeds. Now we have a child of God who must be scolded by one outside God's family.

Do not miss the warning dear friends! Live in such a way that the world will be uplifted by your behavior. Do not make it necessary for the world to call you to task for misbehavior.

Abimelech wanted to know just what he had done to Abraham that Abraham had led him into such trouble. That was not the way a prophet of God should act.

GEN 20:10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

Abimelech wished to know what Abraham had imagined would happen to he and Sarah that would cause the two of them to tell such a lie. What had Abraham foreseen?

GEN 20:11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.



The answer Abraham gave is unjustified. He explained that he realized he was going into an area where Jehovah was not respected as God. Since that was true, he anticipated that such a people would not hesitate to kill him in order to obtain his wife.

God had protected Abraham in Egypt when he found himself in similar circumstances. Why did he not believe God would do the same again? Let the reader remember what Jesus said about those who follow Him. Do you believe that if you forsake father, mother, friends and possessions to follow Jesus that He will take care of every need? If your faith falters when the air gets stormy, then you must begin to understand how Abraham and Sarah could have buckled under pressure.

GEN 20:12 And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

As pointed out before, this was a cowardly half-truth. Abraham was correct in what he said. He was not correct in the application of the information.

GEN 20:13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

God had commanded Abraham to leave his father's house and go to a land which he would be shown in due time. He had followed the divine directions. Still, he did not trust God to protect him from the strangers he was to meet. Therefore he and Sarah had agreed to help God out a little!



GEN 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

Abimelech was taking no chances. He wanted to be quite certain that he had left no room for a hostile attitude on the part of Abraham. The gifts were abundant. Abraham had no reason to refuse offering a prayer for Abimelech and his people.

GEN 20:15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

There is quite a contrast between the attitude of Abimelech here and that of Pharaoh in the past. Pharaoh had told Abraham to get out of his land. Abimelech told Abraham to settle in any part of his land that he saw fit.

GEN 20:16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved.

Abimelech referred to Abraham as her “brother” when he spoke to her. Could there have been just a tiny note of sarcasm in the tone of his voice? He informed Sarah that he had given Abraham a sizable gift to abolish any ill will that might be present. She was informed that Abraham was like a veil, or covering for her eyes. Women of that part of the world wear veils to protect their modesty. These veils declare that they are not open

to advances by males. Abraham was a protection to Sarah in that God was with Abraham and was seeing to it that his seed which was to be produced through Sarah would not be interfered with.

It is said that Sarah was reproved. Abraham and Sarah both found themselves in need of correction by one who should have been taught by them rather than vice versa.

GEN 20:17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.

Abraham agreed to pray for Abimelech and his people, that the sentence of death which had passed upon them would be repealed. His prayer was heard and God caused the curse to be removed.

GEN 20:18 For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

At least now we know part of the details of the curse. The women were unable to become pregnant. Since Abimelech was told that he was a "dead man", it is not too far out of reason to think God acted upon both the men and the women to prevent them from having children as long as Abimelech continued to have sexual plans for himself and Sarah. The men would have been impotent. The women would have been barren. The people of Abimelech had been "dead." When Abraham prayed to God for them, they came alive again.

It would be dishonest not to reveal that some commentators believe some physical disease which would have led to death in the near future for all of Abimelech's people was involved. I do not think the context supports this. But, it is possible.



Chapter 21

GEN 21:1 And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

How much trouble and sorrow it would have saved if Abraham and Sarah had waited for the Lord to keep His solemn promise that they would have a child born to them. Beginning with the events occurring in this chapter, and continuing until the day this commentary is being written, the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael have been in bitter contention. The Jews are seed of Isaac. The Arabs are the seed of Ishmael. The controversy between the Jews and the Arabs has been ever present.

We must not be too hasty in casting stones at Abraham and Sarah for giving up hope and offering Sarah's Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham in an attempt to aid Jehovah in the keeping of His promise. It had been some twenty-five years since the promise had been first made. Who among us today would have been content to wait until the child bearing years had already passed to take some kind of action.

The reader should take note of the repetition of wording. First, it is "as He had said." Then it is "as He had spoken." God keeps His promises when He is ready. Nature is in His hands. He created it and He controls it. There are promises God has made about the return of Christ and the Judgment that men ignore because of the lapse of time since these promises were stated. Just as God kept His promise to Abraham and Sarah, He will keep those concerning the end of the world.

GEN 21:2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

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When God was ready the child was born. Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety at the time. This must have been a source of amazement not only to the two of them, but also to those who observed them day by day.

**GEN 21:3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.**

The name "Isaac" means laughter. Every time the name of the child was repeated, memories would be renewed. Sarah would remember how she laughed in unbelief when the promise was given. Abraham would remember how he laughed in astonishment. Sarah would also remember this day on which Isaac was born and how she laughed in joy.

**GEN 21:4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.**

Abraham observed the commandment of God, as given through Moses, that on the eighth day of life every male child of Jewish parents was to undergo circumcision. Isaac would receive very careful training in keeping the covenant which was given on Mount Sinai.

**GEN 21:5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.**

Actually, there were men who begot children at a much more advanced age than one hundred years. In the pre-flood days men were several hundred years old when they sired children.

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GEN 21:6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

Now the heart which had been so heavy for over twenty years was uplifted and joyous beyond description. Sarah had been considered less than a woman because she had been barren. That scorn was now replaced with admiration among the women who realized what a remarkable wonder had taken place.

GEN 21:7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.

It was inconceivable that this woman of ninety years could not only bring forth a child, but was also able to nurse it. There is evidence here that supports the supposition that Sarah's system was rejuvenated over all. Remember that we wondered why she was desired as a wife by king Abimelech at such a late age. It is quite possible that God provided his own fountain of youth to insure the healthy production of the promised babe.

GEN 21:8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

We have evidence that it was a common thing for women to nurse their children for two to three years in that part of the world at that time. It was also common for a feast to be prepared in honor of the weaning of the youngster. Abraham must have been quite proud of his son who was now off to a good start in life.

GEN 21:9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

Although it is not absolutely stated that this mocking took place during the course of the weaning feast, it is extremely likely. At this time Ishmael would have been about sixteen years of age. It would have been very easy for him to take advantage of his half-brother who was about three.

It is also not too difficult to understand why Ishmael might have acted as he did. After all, he had been very important in the eyes of Abraham, his father, from the time he was born until Isaac arrived on the scene. With the arrival of Isaac we can just imagine what kind of jealousy arose in his mind when he saw the attention shifted from himself to Isaac. He was acting just as one might have expected him to do.

GEN 21:10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

Sarah saw what was taking place. She also acted just as we might have expected. She was Abraham's true wife. Hagar was only her handmaid. She did not intend to put up with any abuse of her son by the son of her servant.

Her demand was in harmony with the law. If a concubine bore a man his first born son, and then later a true wife bore him a son, the son of the true wife was to be his heir, but the concubine and her son had the right to be made free from their slavery. This seems to have been Sarah's demand.



GEN 21:11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

Abraham was miserable. He loved his son Ishmael. He had no doubt taken great pride in Ishmael's growth and accomplishments. How could he now just send the young man and his mother away from his presence?

GEN 21:12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

God stepped in and helped to solve the problem. Abraham was instructed to do as Sarah demanded. Ishmael would be provided for. It would be through Isaac that the world would be blessed spiritually, but as the son of Abraham, Ishmael would also play a part in history.

GEN 21:13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

Interestingly enough, Ishmael had twelve sons, just as Isaac's son Jacob did. Rather than dying in the wilderness, Ishmael would survive and multiply abundantly.

GEN 21:14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

Abraham did as God told him. He did not linger about



it, moaning and asking if God really meant for this sad parting to occur. He arose early the next morning and prepared for the departure. He gave Hagar a bottle of water which she could carry on her shoulder. He placed the youngster in her custody and sent her out to wander in the wilderness of Beersheba.

This would have been an abrupt change in life style for Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham was a rich man. The Hagar and Ishmael would have been living in plenteous surroundings. Could they truly survive under these harsh circumstances? As far as the record goes, God did not tell Abraham the bottle of water was to be the sole nourishment he was to provide. Why would this rich man not send camels and plenteous food supplies with the two?

I suggest that the answer to this lies in Abraham's faith in the providence of God. If God told him to send the two away, God would handle their survival in his own way. Abraham would trust his Lord.

GEN 21:15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

As might have been anticipated, the water ran out. It looked like death was just a short way ahead. The context here makes it appear that Ishmael was a child small enough that Hagar could carry him in her arms and place him under a shrub where he could die in the shade.

We know from other statements in the record that Ishmael was about sixteen or seventeen years of age. There are two words in this verse which need to have our attention. When one casts fishing bait, one throws it out into the water. The original Hebrew word here does

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not demand that Hagar carry Ishmael and drop him down under the shrub. She may have only aided him when he was too weak to move by himself. The relative weakness of the son could possibly have been because he had allowed his mother the major share of the water in the bottle. The other word under suspicion is the one translated as child. It can also be translated as youth.

I am quick to admit that there is a problem in the English translation. I do not know that I have found the answer to the problem. I have learned to be very careful about criticizing the statements found in God's book. I have found all too often that what I considered to be an unanswerable objection turned out to have a simple solution.

**GEN 21:16 And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.**

Hagar was fully convinced that Ishmael was about to die. She moved far enough away that she was not able to see her son and then cried out loud in grief.

**GEN 21:17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.**

Hagar was not the only one who was crying out. Ishmael was doing the same. Neither of them wanted to perish in the wilderness.

But Abraham was not wrong in placing his confidence



in his God. The angel of the Lord was sent to care for the two wanderers. They were not to die. He spoke to Hagar and asked her about her crying. He added that she must not fear; God was aware of their plight. He knew full well where they were and what was happening to them.

**GEN 21:18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.**

The problems continue. Is Hagar to reach down and pick up her sixteen year old son and hold him in her arms like a two year old? Again the translation leaves something to be desired. One can place one's arms around another person who is lying down and lift a portion of their body from the ground. They can then brace that person with their arms and hands to comfort them. If Hagar will do as the angel of the Lord instructs, she will find that God is more than willing to see that things work together for good. But, just how will God help.

The promise to Hagar is that not just Isaac will fulfil the promise made to Abraham that his seed would be as many as the stars of the heaven and the sand on the seashore. Ishmael's descendants would also multiply into an entire nation. We have seen this happen in the vast number of Arabs in the world through the centuries.

**GEN 21:19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.**

Either God created the well of water, or else it had already been present and she had not noticed it. She immediately filled her bottle with water and both of them

managed to live through the terrible experience. God had said he would make a great nation from Ishmael. That could not take place if he had died of thirst.

**GEN 21:20 And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.**

God did not forget Ishmael after the passing of this incident. He saw to it that the boy grew into mature manhood. As an archer, Ishmael would have fed on wild animals in the wilderness. He would have covered much territory in his search for food. The Arabs still tend to be less stable than their Jewish relatives.

**GEN 21:21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.**

The word wilderness does not mean the land was covered with forest or thickets. It refers to the lack of human inhabitants. As Hagar was an Egyptian, she saw to it that her son married an Egyptian woman. Thus the Arabs of later years are closely related to the Egyptian people.

**GEN 21:22 And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:**

The scene now returns to Abraham and his household. Apparently the same Abimelech who had intended to take Sarah to himself came to Abraham with a proposition. He and the captain of his military came to the patriarch



and admitted that they knew God was with him. They had good reason to know that fact. Closed wombs and impotent males had been very persuasive evidence. Since Abimelech did not wish to see confrontation between his own people and those of Abraham, he offered to make a peace pact.

**GEN 21:23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.**

Abimelech desired that Abraham promise before his God that both of them deal kindly with one another and that the kindness extend to their children. He reminded Abraham that he had been kind to him in restoring his wife. He wanted Abraham to display the same type of concern for him.

**GEN 21:24 And Abraham said, I will swear.**

Abraham readily agreed to enter into the agreement. With God as his witness, he swore not to mistreat Abimelech or his kinsfolk.

**GEN 21:25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.**

There was one problem that needed to be dissolved at the very beginning. Water wells were a matter of life and death to people living in that area. Some of Abimelech's servants had forcefully taken possession of a well that

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had belonged to Abraham. This needed to be remedied.

GEN 21:26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing; neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day.

Abimelech denied having any knowledge of what had happened. Abraham had not even mentioned it to him until that very time. He would be happy to restore the well.

GEN 21:27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant.

It would seem that Abimelech would have offered Abraham livestock in an effort to mend the mischief. Instead, Abraham offered Abimelech sheep and oxen as an indication that he accepted Abimelech's willingness to make things right. The two of them made a covenant that would insure peace between them.

GEN 21:28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

In addition to the other gifts, Abraham offered seven ewe lambs to Abimelech. These had a special meaning.

GEN 21:29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

Abimelech was puzzled. What did Abraham mean by offering him the seven ewe lambs, separate from the rest of the gifts?

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**GEN 21:30** And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

Abraham informed Abimelech that the lambs would serve as testimony that he had dug the well and that it belonged to him. Every time Abimelech saw the sheep he would be reminded of the covenant the two had made.

**GEN 21:31** Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.

The relationship between the name “Beersheba” and the well is not quite clear. Some believe the word means “well of the seven.” Others render it “well of the oath.” At any rate the well provided a symbol of the agreement they had shared.

**GEN 21:32** Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

This thirty-second verse implies that Beersheba was not in the land of the Philistines. It may be that the Philistines were concentrated more to the southeast of Canaan, whereas the well of Beersheba lies almost dead center in south Canaan. The well was left in the possession of Abraham.

**GEN 21:33** And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.





Some would like to connect Abraham's planting a grove near the well with some type of idolatrous worship. There is no hint of that in the passage. Abraham was proud of the well and planted the grove as decoration and shade for those who visited the location.

**GEN 21:34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.**

Beersheba became the home of Abraham in later days. At this time, however, he left the well and moved through the land of the Philistines for some time.

## *Chapter 22*

**GEN 22:1** And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

After these things refers to the confrontation and later covenant between Abraham and Abimelech. There was to be an agreement that each would respect the other and promote peace.

Beginning at this point, we have one of the most emotionally packed chapters of the entire Word of God. Any person with normal ability to feel compassion for others must weep with Abraham during this great test of his faith.

A number of writers point out that the translators would have been more accurate if they had made use of the word “test” rather than tempt. Temptation is normally the tool of the Devil as he attempts to turn men from righteousness to evil. Testing is much more appropriate in describing the manner in which God determines the strength of one’s faith in Him.

We are not told precisely how God spoke to Abraham. Sometimes God spoke through angels. Sometimes it seems He spoke with a voice sounding like thunder. We must satisfy ourselves here with the simple statement of the text. “God said to Abraham.” Abraham did not hesitate to respond to the voice of the Lord. His reply that “Here I am.” indicates a willingness on his part to follow the will of the Father in heaven, whatever it might be.

**GEN 22:2** And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a  
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burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Jehovah was about to ask Abraham to make a tremendous sacrifice. He indicated to the patriarch that he knew very well just how precious this sacrifice was to be. It was to be Abraham's son. It was to be his only son Isaac. It was to be the son he loved so dearly.

The reader will recall that Isaac did not enter Abraham's life without much anxiety. Abraham was an old man. His wife Sarah was passed the age of childbearing when God finally blessed the two of them with their long desired son. It is true, of course that Abraham did have another son named Ishmael. However, Isaac was the son of promise. His father had no doubt watched him grow and often considered the oath of God that through Abraham's seed all nations of the earth would be blessed.

Now it would seem that God had asked something that would negate everything He had promised. Isaac was to be taken to a mountain several miles away and his life was to be offered as a burnt offering.

We cannot help wondering just what went through the mind of Abraham. The first word which arises in our mind is the word "impossible." But, we must remind ourselves that Abraham had entertained that word before when he had waited beyond the years when he and Sarah could bear offspring. The impossible had taken place then. Somehow the impossible could become possible once more!

The land of Moriah is the very place where Solomon built the temple of God. It is very likely that the mount upon which Abraham was to offer his son was the same mount which is later known as Calvary.



GEN 22:3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Abraham did not plead and beg God to reconsider His command. He rose up early the next morning and proceeded to carry out that command. An ass was saddled, perhaps to carry the wood to burn the offering. Two young men were chosen to accompany he and his son, and the wood was cut.

I have heard this chapter taught many times. I have read many commentators. Almost always the grief of Abraham is mentioned without any mention of the feelings of Sarah. One of the considerations that must have torn at Abraham's heart would have been the need to tell Sarah what he was about to do. If he had delayed the conversation with Sarah until after he returned without her son, it would have been no easier. Perhaps we will find his solution to that problem as we move along in the chapter.

GEN 22:4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

It is generally believed that Mount Moriah was some thirty to fifty miles from Beersheba, where Abraham made his home at this time. The text does not demand that they traveled for three entire days. It just says on the third day he lifted up his eyes and saw the place.

I am reminded of the steadfastness of our Lord Jesus Christ as he moved toward the cross. He had prayed



that if it be possible the cup of suffering might be taken away. Nevertheless, if that could not be, the will of the Father must be done. The thoughts of Abraham and the thoughts of Jesus must have been quite similar.

GEN 22:5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

Apparently the two young men had served their purpose by the time the offering was to actually take place. This again reminds one of the fact that Jesus had to bear the cross alone.

Isaac is called a "lad." When we see pictures of Abraham and Isaac headed for the sacrifice, the artist always pictures Isaac as a child of eight to fourteen years of age. There is reason to wonder about the accuracy of such pictures. Does the word "lad" here mean Isaac was but a child? The various commentators vary widely in their conclusions. Some place his age at as little as three years. Others suggest twelve to fourteen. Still others contend that Isaac must have been well over thirty years of age. Is there any solid evidence upon which to venture a statement?

I have searched through a large number of writers, as well as the text of the Bible. I do not find a definite statement as to the age of Isaac at this time. All I know is that Abraham was one hundred years of age when Isaac was born. The same Hebrew word which is here translated as "lad" is used to describe armed soldiers in another location. I am very hesitant to make a guess. Some feel that if Isaac was a grown man of thirty years, he could have easily overpowered a man of one hundred and thirty or more. Thus he would have accompanied his

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father by consent rather than by force. He was definitely old enough to carry the wood which was to be used to burn the offering.

Abraham assured the two men who were left behind that he and the lad would return after they had worshipped. The explanation of this is found in Hebrews 11:17-19. There we find the following statement. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Abraham was convinced that after he had killed his son, God would raise him from the dead. This is a mark of great faith. We have no record of anyone being raised from the dead before the time of Abraham.

**GEN 22:6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.**

Isaac carried the wood which was supposedly to be used for offering him. Jesus also carried the cross upon which he was crucified. The similarities between Isaac and Christ are becoming more and more evident.

Fire, wood and a knife could lead to but one conclusion. Something was about to be sacrificed. Those who believe Isaac knew by this time what was happening are wrong. Isaac did not know before this that he was to be the sacrifice.

**GEN 22:7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I,**

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my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

The heathen offered their sons for sacrifice to the pagan gods. Jehovah had condemned such practices. Some of the most vivid condemnations in the scriptures are related to passing one's children through the fire to Molech. Isaac was in for a shock.

GEN 22:8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Did Abraham know God would cause a ram to be caught in the thicket in order that it might replace Isaac upon the altar? In two different senses we find Abraham's statement to be true. A ram was provided. But far beyond that, God provided Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of all who will make use of that sacrifice. The statement was really a prophecy of the offering of the Saviour.

It seems, however, that Isaac's question was answered evasively. At least for the moment Abraham did not have to tell his son what the real object of the present sacrifice was to be.

The two of them trudged on up the mountain.

GEN 22:9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

There is a certain amount of agreement that Mount Moriah is the same as the mount of Calvary upon which Jesus was crucified. If this is true, one cannot avoid

wondering how far from the exact spot Abraham and Isaac were when the wood was laid in order for the offering of Isaac.

Since Isaac was of sufficient age to carry the wood which they had brought, he must also have been of sufficient strength to struggle when he was bound. It must be true that he willingly allowed himself to be bound. There is no hint of resistance on his part. This is parallel to the attitude of Christ who accepted the will of the Father in heaven and gave himself to die for us. Thus there seems absolutely no doubt that Isaac was a type of Jesus Christ.

GEN 22:10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

According to Hebrews 11:17-19, Abraham truly believed he was going to have to kill his own precious son who was born out of due season, and whom he cherished with all his heart. He did believe that if this took place, Isaac would be raised from death to live again. Nevertheless, Abraham and Isaac were both clearly ready to pass through the ordeal of completing the bloody deed.

What excruciatingly painful thoughts must have passed through the mind of this loving father. When I was in my teen years I was sometimes forced to help in the butchering of animals on the farm. A hog would be wrestled to the ground. The knife would be plunged into it's throat and the blood would gush out from the jugular vein. The hog would then be allowed to get up and would walk around until it dropped from weakness. If this was any one of my children into whom the knife was to be inserted, I do not see how I could have done that which Abraham was willing to do. He truly earned his title, "Father of the faithful."



GEN 22:11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

At the very last second, the angel of the Lord interrupted the procedure. The voice of the angel spoke out from heaven itself and captured the attention of Abraham. Abraham's reply was "Here I am." These same three words were used on other occasions when someone was placing their life in the hands of the Lord. Samuel made the same reply centuries before this.

GEN 22:12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

At that point God was satisfied that Abraham would do anything to please Him. If he would kill his own dear son at the command of Jehovah, he would do anything else God placed before him.

To fear God is not necessarily to quake and tremble. The word "fear" is used numerous times in the scriptures to indicate willingness to obey. Solomon said fearing God and keeping His commandments is the whole duty of man.

Notice that the angel used the word "me." This is but one of the places where it seems that the "Angel of the Lord" is equated with God Himself.

GEN 22:13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

When Abraham looked up from the unpleasant task he had been given, he saw the ram. He had previously informed Isaac that God would provide a lamb for the offering. It is highly doubtful that he had foreseen what was not happening. He had expected that Isaac would be killed.

There is no way for us to realize the deep sigh of relief Abraham must have breathed when God told him it would not be necessary to bring his son's life to an end. We must also remember that God was not so fortunate when His cherished Son did die for the sins of men.

GEN 22:14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Why was the name "Jehovahjireh" given to this place? Jehovahjireh means "The Lord provides." Yes, in the mount of the Lord, God had provided a lamb as a replacement for Isaac. He has also provided a Lamb as a replacement for you and I, if we will believe, repent and walk according to His will.

GEN 22:15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

The first time the angel spoke, there had been momentous good news. What would the message be this second time?

GEN 22:16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:



God had a promise to make to this faithful servant. As a result of Abraham's having passed the test of fidelity to the Divine will, God had a reward for him. This reward was related to his willingness to give up his hope that the world might be blessed through his seed. That was the promise God had made back in the twelfth chapter of this book.

The oath which God was about to make was sworn before Himself because there is no greater. As witnesses in court are sworn in before God to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" God was now making just such an oath Himself.

GEN 22:17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

God was actually only explaining in somewhat more detail the promise He had previously made. He was not about to abandon the seed promise. The descendants of Abraham would be as numerous as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore.

The point is that his descendants would be innumerable. We need not worry about how many grains of sand there are. We need not worry about whether or not about the number of stars there were beyond those which Abraham could actually count. In place of the loss of his son Isaac, God would provide numberless seed for this good man. He was to become known as "The father of the faithful."

Not much is said by the commentators about the last phrase in this verse. May I remind the reader that Jesus said a time was coming when "All the kingdoms



of the earth will become of God.” He also instructed men to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Isaiah predicted the time would come when “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.” I would then urge every man and woman of faith to examine the first nine verses of the twentieth chapter of Revelation. Only time will tell the details of God’s promise of victory for the saints. Certainly God’s saints will prevail in the judgment, for at that time “Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess” the power of Christ and the glory of God.

GEN 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

It is not through his fleshly seed along that men will receive this great blessing. Both Jew and Gentile will be heirs with faithful Abraham. They may become his spiritual seed, even if they are not his fleshly descendants.

God will see that those who obey Him are not left hopeless. It may appear from time to time that all hope is gone. In the end, the rewards of faith will be far greater than the trials which are endured in reaching out for that hope. Do not give up. God is not slack concerning His promises!

GEN 22:19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

The two young men who had traveled much of the way with Abraham and Isaac had been told to wait until they returned. Now the entire group is together again



and they headed back to Beersheba where Abraham made his home in the south of Canaan.

GEN 22:20 And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;

These last five verses of the chapter almost seem as if they had been tacked on without a reason. That is not the case. They very logically follow the promise God had just made to Abraham. We are to see just how his line of descendants moved from his own generation to future generations.

Nahor was not Abraham's only brother. Nahor was the brother through whom his seed would come. Nahor had married a woman named Milcah and had brought forth a number of children.

GEN 22:21 Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,

GEN 22:22 And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

GEN 22:23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Nahor had produced eight children through Milcah. The one that is the key to the inclusion of these last five verses is Rebekah. It was through Rebekah that the line of the promise would come. She was to become the wife of Isaac.

GEN 22:24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

Nahor produced four more children through a concubine named Reumah.

God did not approve of concubines. In the beginning He made one man and one woman. He commanded that a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. He did not use the plural. According to the words of Jesus Christ, it was only because of the hardness of men's hearts that God allowed a plurality of wives and concubines. Nahor, Solomon and even Abraham himself were wrong in uniting with multiple women.

Chapter 23

GEN 23:1 And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah.

At the time Isaac was born, Sarah was ninety years of age. She died at the age of one hundred twenty-seven, which means Isaac was thirty-seven years old when his mother died. Abraham was ten years older than Sarah and he died at the age of one hundred seventy-five. Thus Abraham lived on after Sarah's death for another thirty-eight years.

During that time Abraham married Keturah and she bore him six sons. Keturah is said to be Abraham's wife. Hagar was said to be his concubine. Genesis 25:6 tells us Abraham left his possessions to Isaac and none was given to the sons of his concubines. This indicates at least one other concubine in addition to Hagar. However, we have no mention of the name of any other.

GEN 23:2 And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

When one sees the word Kirjath as part of the name of a community in the scriptures, it means the city of. Kirjath-arba was the "city of arba." Arba was no doubt the name of an individual who was prominent in the history of the city.

The fact that Abraham "came" to mourn for his wife tells us he was very likely in some other location at the time of her death. She may also have died without a lingering sickness, otherwise having loved her as much as he did, he would probably have been with her.

The two had formed a very loving relationship over an extended period of time. The only scar seems to have been in the case of Hagar and the jealousy which arose over Isaac and Ishmael. The death of a beloved spouse is reason to grieve. If the two truly became one flesh as God suggested in the beginning, the death of a spouse is like one's personal death. Abraham's tears were not a sign of weakness. They were a badge of honor to both he and Sarah.

GEN 23:3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

The sons of Heth are thought to be Hittites. Heth was a descendant of Canaan. Abraham had settled in land which was in the possession of these persons.

GEN 23:4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

There is no record in the Bible of Abraham having owned any property in Canaan up to this time. Hebrews calls him a sojourner and a wanderer in a strange land (Heb. 11:9).

As will be seen in the following verses, Abraham was not asking for a gift. He was quite willing to pay what the owner of the property asked for it. He was only requesting that it be made available that he might buy it.

It would not take long for the body of his wife to begin decomposition. He did not wish to allow that. He desired to give her a proper resting place.

GEN 23:5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

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The response was immediate. Those who had been associated with the patriarch in the days previous to Sarah's death had genuine respect for him. This was as it should have been. God's people should always command the respect of those around them, regardless of the age in which they live. Christians should be known as dependable and considerate today just as Abraham was admired in his time.

**GEN 23:6 Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.**

The sons of Heth paid Abraham the highest of compliments. They called him a mighty prince among them. Although he did not own property, he still manifested the character which would be expected of a man of God.

They offered to make any burying place they possessed available to him. He could take his choice of any one he wished.

**GEN 23:7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth.**

The people of the eastern countries are much more formal than those who live in Europe and the Americas. They are more apt to completely prostrate themselves on the ground in prayer. They are also apt to bow deeply before others in greeting. Abraham paid his respects to those of whom he was about to make his purchase.



**GEN 23:8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,**

Abraham had apparently already decided which property he would like to have. It belonged to Ephron the Hittite. He indicated that he would be very pleased if Ephron would sell him the place he was about to describe.

**GEN 23:9 That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you.**

The property Abraham desired was a cave. This may seem strange to our ears. We think of burying our loved ones in the ground rather than in caves. We do sometimes cremate the body and place the ashes in a mausoleum etc.

The place Abraham chose was in one end of a field. There were trees close by and by all we can see, it must have been a pretty location.

**GEN 23:10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,**

Ephron the Hittite agreed with all of the conversation which had gone before. He made it clear in the presence of a number of witnesses that he was pleased to make the cave available to Abraham.



Some of those who witnessed the transaction were the sons of Heth who may have stood to inherit the property later.

**GEN 23:11** Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

Ephron was very generous. He was willing to give it to Abraham. There was no need for Abraham to pay for it. Before all of the witnesses he would provide it as a gift.

Some commentators see this as simply following the manners of the east. They do not believe, in view of the money which he suggested later, that he had any generous intentions. The price he stated is thought to be more than the property was worth. That does not correspond with the free gift offer. There seems to be a problem here.

**GEN 23:12** And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.

Abraham does not appear to think the price is out of order. He politely bowed himself again before these witnesses and agreed to pay Ephron's stated price.

**GEN 23:13** And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.

Abraham did not wish to receive the cave as a gift.



It was important to him that everyone know he was the owner after the sale. This is in accord with the statement God had made that this land would belong to Abraham if he would leave Ur of the Chaldees and travel to it. Abraham did not intend to return to Ur. Canaan was now his home. He obviously desired that his descendants also make it their home. He insisted that Ephron take the money.

**GEN 23:14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,**

**GEN 23:15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.**

It is generally agreed that four hundred shekels of silver was an exorbitant price for the piece of land Abraham wished to own. However, this does not seem to fit into the general tenor of the conversation. It may be that this particular piece of property was worth more than many of the commentators believe. It sounds as if Ephron is saying he was willing to give the cave and the field to Abraham, but since Abraham insisted on purchasing it, he would offer it to him at a reasonable price. I have trouble believing the price was outlandish.

**GEN 23:16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.**

We have little way of knowing what the going price was for such property. We do not know whether this

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particular property was more valuable than the average. Perhaps we ought to see Ephron as genuinely willing to sell at a reasonable price, and see Abraham as very well satisfied with the arrangement.

GEN 23:17 And the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure

GEN 23:18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

Abraham purchased not only the cave itself. He bought the field in which it was located. The field included a number of trees which surrounded it.

The entire transaction was witnessed by the children of Heth and any of those who were passing through the city gate. We have several names connected with this procedure. These names will arise a number of times in our later study of Genesis. We have Machpelah. We have Mamre. We have Hebron and we have Kirjath-arba. Watch for each of these as we move onward.

GEN 23:19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.

The noble patriarch then bid good-bye to his beloved Sarah as her remains were placed in the cave which he had bought. Several others were to be interred in this same burial ground. Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were all placed there.



GEN 23:20 And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

It is reported that the location of the cave is fairly well established to the present day. However, Christians have not been allowed to enter it. Would the remains of these famous persons still rest there? When Jacob died he requested that he be buried in the cave with his fathers. Joseph commanded the physicians to embalm his father and they did so. Jacob's body might well be preserved as well as those of the Pharaoh's.

Chapter 24

GEN 24:1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

Sarah was one hundred twenty-seven years of age at her death. Abraham was ten years older, making him one hundred thirty-seven. The events of this chapter take place after the death of Sarah.

Abraham was a wealthy man. He had herds of animals and also gold and silver. God had indeed been very good to him.

GEN 24:2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

We do not know the name of this faithful servant. We do know that Abraham placed great confidence in the man. He had allowed him to become the administrator of all that he possessed.

Abraham was now ready to give the servant one of the most important tasks he had ever undertaken. The servant was to find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac.

Abraham thought it proper to place the servant under the most sacred of oaths. To make it as serious as he could, he commanded the servant to place his hand under Abraham's thigh as he promised. This may seem improper to us as we read the account today. It was not so in Abraham's day. It appears that it was not uncommon at that time for a man to place his hand on the genital region of the other man's body when making an extremely important oath. It becomes even more

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reasonable when we realize the choosing of a wife for Isaac is closely related to the seed promise and thus vitally connected to the reproductive process.

**GEN 24:3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:**

Men often use the name of the Lord of all creation in a light a frivolous way. We hear men use the words "By God." as if all they were useful for was to call attention to the cursing coming from their mouth. When Abraham requested that his servant swear by the LORD, he was using the name of the LORD in exactly the opposite manner. No more solemn oath could have been pronounced.

God had made it very clear that the family of Abraham was especially important to him in the blessing of all nations. The mixing of his descendants with the other families of the earth diluted the hope of the promise. Isaac's wife was to be selected from his own kinsfolk.

**GEN 24:4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.**

**GEN 24:5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?**

The servant was much concerned. There was a strong possibility that once he found a suitable woman, she would refuse to travel the long journey and leave her family to return with him. What was he to do in case that did take place?





There was a possibility. Was it permissible for the servant to take Isaac to Mesopotamia, the land from which Abraham had come. If the woman would not come to Canaan, perhaps Isaac could go to where she was.

**GEN 24:6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.**

The servant received a quick reply to his question. Under no conditions was he to take Isaac out of the land of Canaan. He would be in serious trouble if he were to do that.

**GEN 24:7 The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.**

God had called upon Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and travel to a land which He would show to the patriarch. Abraham intended for his seed to continue in that land of promise.

Abraham informed the servant that God would send His angel with him and this would aid him in fulfilling the task before him. This is but one more instance of a mention of an angel who seems to be more important than the rest of the angelic host.

**GEN 24:8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.**

If, after it was clear that the proper woman had been found, she refused to come from Mesopotamia to Canaan,

the servant would not be held responsible. But one thing was certain. Isaac was not to leave Canaan.

**GEN 24:9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning that matter.**

The servant completed the oath as Abraham had directed him. He promised Abraham in the sight of God that he would do his best to bring a wife back to Isaac.

**GEN 24:10 And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.**

We find out from later verses that there were others in the caravan. Ten camels were selected from the herd of the patriarch. Goods of various kinds were collected and packed.

We are told nothing about the details of the journey. This was a matter of several hundred miles. It may seem strange that the record is not more specific. The Bible does not dwell on facts that are unnecessary to the progress of God's plan. The group arrived in Mesopotamia and the city of Nahor who was the brother of Abraham.

**GEN 24:11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.**



Camels are an animal with a queer physique. Their long neck makes a U turn. When they drink, it is easiest for them if they kneel down on their front legs to drink. As the servant arrived at the city well, the camels were dry and thirsty. Remember there were ten of them.

It was the time of evening when the young women of the city were accustomed to drawing water for their families. This would be a task that was not too hard for these young women. It was very likely a task, however, that they would not have eagerly looked forward to each evening.

**GEN 24:12 And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.**

The servant knew he needed the help of the angel of God. He prayed to God that he would have help in determining which of the women he would meet might be the one to approach about marriage with Isaac.

**GEN 24:13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:**

Again, the servant had a possible solution. He was standing by the well. He was thirsty. It would not be long before the young women would appear to draw water and take it home with them.

**GEN 24:14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let**



**the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.**

The servant asked God for a sign. If he asked a young woman to give him a drink, and she agreed to do that and also to draw enough water for his ten camels, he would know she was the one whom God had selected.

One source informs us that each thirsty camel could drink more than twenty gallons of water. Ten camels would then require some two hundred gallons. This would take considerable time and effort on the part of the damsel. If she was willing to spend that much labor to help a stranger, he would know she was the one for whom he was seeking.

**GEN 24:15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.**

Even before the servant's prayer was completed, Rebekah appeared with her pitcher. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Nahor and Milcah.

Just how much should a person today ask of God in the way of signs? This can be a very precarious practice. If one asks God for a specific sign, and the sign is not produced, there may well be a conclusion that either there is no God, or God does not care. I believe it is better today to simply ask God to direct our steps in order that they conform to His will.

There is a passage of scripture that fits admirably with the answering of the servant's prayer. Isaiah 65:24 makes a solemn promise from God. And it shall come to



pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

**GEN 24:16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.**

Fortunately Rebekah was a beautiful young woman. Poor Isaac was setting in the background all this time. Things might not have worked out just that way!

She is said to be a virgin, and also that no man had known her. This is not two separate facts. It is only a way of repeating a statement for emphasis. The New Testament calls upon men to “Repent and turn.” Repentance and turning from sin are the same. The pattern is for emphasis, the same as in our present verse.

**GEN 24:17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.**

Notice that the servant did not ask for much. He spoke of giving him just a drink of water for himself. The request was minor. The answer was precisely what he had hoped and prayed for.

**GEN 24:18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.**

First Rebekah offered to give him the drink for which he had asked. This might have been no more than most of the other damsels would have done.

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GEN 24:19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

Then she went much farther. She offered to draw water enough for those thirsty camels.

GEN 24:20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

Over and over again she returned to the well and then came back to complete her promise. One commentator I read suggested that probably most of the young women had to be prodded to leave their home and draw the water, to say nothing of drawing two hundred gallons for a stranger and his camels.

But, God's hand is in this.

GEN 24:21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

The servant pondered whether or not he would be able to bring the young woman back to Canaan as Abraham had insisted be done. She might very well give him a quick no answer when she was asked.

GEN 24:22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

He waited until all of the camels were satisfied. Then he did what has melted the heart of many a fair young

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maiden. He gave her some valuable jewelry.

First, there was what the King James Version calls a golden earring. It weighed a half shekel. A shekel is approximately an ounce. If the reader will check the price of gold on the market, he will be able to place a precise value on the earring.

There is a question here. Why would the servant give Rebekah a single earring when she had two ears? One suggestion is that the word *naphal* which is translated as earring would have been better translated as nose-ring. The women of that part of the world often do use nose rings as part of their jewelry.

He also added two bracelets for her wrists, each weighing ten shekels of gold. This was no small gift. She should have been properly impressed. His task would be made easier now.

**GEN 24:23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?**

He then asked whose daughter she was. If he was to ask her to go back to Canaan with him, he would not only need her consent, he would need the approval of her family. If he could spend the night in her father's house he would have the opportunity to make the request.

**GEN 24:24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Nahor, which she bare unto Nahor.**

In revealing her identity she said she was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Nahor. Since Abraham and Nahor were brothers, this means Bethuel and Isaac would have been first cousins. As the daughter



of Bethuel, this would make Rebekah a second cousin to Isaac. Abraham was to have his wishes fulfilled. Isaac's wife would come from his close kinsfolk.

But would this not mean that Isaac would be a generation older than his bride to be? Not necessarily. We recall that Isaac was the son of Abraham and Sarah's old age. He may have been much closer to the age of Rebekah than would at first appear.

**GEN 24:25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.**

Rebekah went even farther than she had before. She had given the servant a drink. Then she had watered his camels. Now she was offering lodging for the night. God must be behind the events of the day.

**GEN 24:26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.**

**GEN 24:27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.**

The servant offered a prayer of gratitude. His master's wishes had been at least partially taken care of. All that was left was to determine whether this young woman and her family would agree to her departure.

**GEN 24:28 And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.**





Rebekah must have had confidence that her family would agree with her invitation for the servant and his associates to stay the night.

Bible students have wondered why it is mentioned that she ran and told those her mother's house. Why did she not go tell those of her father's house? That would be the way the Bible would normally present such things. There must have been some reason why it was expressed in the way it was. We will come back to this question in a few verses.

**GEN 24:29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.**

Rebekah's brother, Laban, hastened out to where the servant was at the location of the well. We do not know just why he made such haste. It has been suggested that the reason is revealed in the next verse.

**GEN 24:30 And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.**

Laban had seen the golden jewelry and had very impressed. Had he cast greedy eyes upon these gifts and decided he might be able to follow this up to his own profit?

**GEN 24:31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.**



Laban echoed the words of Rebekah. The servant was welcome to stay at their home for the night. He had already made preparations for both the man and his camels.

**GEN 24:32 And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.**

When the servant came to the house, Laban took the saddles, etc. off the camels. He gave them food. He provided water for the servant to wash his feet. He also provided enough water for those who were with the servant to wash their feet.

We stated earlier that there were other with the servant in addition to himself. This verse verifies that statement.

**GEN 24:33 And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.**

A meal was set for the servant. He refused to eat until he had revealed the purpose of his journey. Eating was secondary to completing the task his master had placed upon him.

Laban invited him to make his purposes known.

**GEN 24:34 And he said, I am Abraham's servant.**

**GEN 24:35 And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.**



**GEN 24:36** And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

Less comment is required for these next verses. Much of it is a repetition of events which had gone before. The servant did make it clear that his master, Abraham was a very rich man. If the reader will go check the passage where Abraham and Lot found it necessary to separate because their herds were so great the land could not sustain both of them, he will begin to understand the wealth of Abraham.

**GEN 24:37** And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

**GEN 24:38** But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

**GEN 24:39** And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

**GEN 24:40** And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

**GEN 24:41** Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

**GEN 24:42** And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:

**GEN 24:43** Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin

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cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

GEN 24:44 And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

GEN 24:45 And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

GEN 24:46 And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

GEN 24:47 And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

GEN 24:48 And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

GEN 24:49 And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

The facts were put forward in as plain a manner as possible. God was directing the things that were occurring. Would Rebekah and her family honor that which God had made so evident? Or would the servant need to search farther?



GEN 24:50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

Why did Laban take the lead here? He was Rebekah's sister. Bethuel was her father. We would normally expect Bethuel to have taken the lead. It is quite possible that Bethuel was handicapped by age. He may have leaned upon Laban for assistance in making decisions. That may also help to explain why it was said earlier that Rebekah ran to her mother's house.

GEN 24:51 Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.

Rebekah's father and brother both were willing to allow their daughter and sister to go. We realize, nevertheless, that a marriage is not all it might be if the bride is unwilling. Will Rebekah follow the lead of her relatives?

GEN 24:52 And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.

We have here another example of the exaggerated form of humbling one's self which is practiced in the eastern part of the world. The servant bowed himself all the way to the ground to show his thanksgiving for the progress which had already been made in his efforts. God must be thanked.

GEN 24:53 And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave



them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

The servant expressed his gratitude to Rebekah's mother and brother for the decisions which had been made. Notice that her father is once more faded into the background. We can only ponder the reasons. The Bible does not reveal them. We must accept the record as it is given.

No doubt the precious gifts had no adverse influence upon either Rebekah or her family.

GEN 24:54 And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

After things had proceeded to this point, the servant and those who were with him passed the night and woke up in the morning. The servant was ready to depart immediately.

GEN 24:55 And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

The family hesitated to allow Rebekah to leave on such short notice. They wanted just a few days to get used to the idea. After all, they had not seen Abraham for a very long time. It was quite possible that they might never see their daughter and sister again. Surely the servant could allow ten days before leaving.

GEN 24:56 And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.



It was not to be so. The servant wanted to leave right away. Although it might seem somewhat cruel to insist upon such a hasty good-by, it would probably not have been any easier after the ten days had passed.

GEN 24:57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. 58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

But there was still the question as to whether Rebekah herself was willing to go at all, to say nothing of leaving on such short notice. The family called for the maiden and asked if she would go. Her answer was a firm “Yes, I will go.”

GEN 24:59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant, and his men.

And so the family said their good-byes to Rebekah. They bade farewell to the servant, and his men. And they sent Rebekah’s nurse along with her. If the family of Rebekah had a nurse for this young woman who was old enough to enter into marriage, they must also have had some degree of affluence.

GEN 24:60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

The family pronounced a blessing upon Rebekah. They prayed that she might become the mother of billions of descendants. Falls in line with God’s promise to Abraham



that his seed would become as numerous as the stars of the heaven and the sand of the seashore. Apparently the family knew of the promise to Abraham.

GEN 24:61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Not only did Rebekah have the nurse to accompany her, she had a plurality of damsels also. This was quite a company which came back along with the servant whom Abraham had sent.

GEN 24:62 And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.

Isaac lived some distance south of where Abraham dwelt at Hebron. Isaac had gone out to a well which was located near his dwelling.

It should be apparent to any reader of the Old Testament that wells were particularly precious in the land of Canaan and surrounding territories.

GEN 24:63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

Isaac had gone out to meditate. Can we speculate for just a moment. What was the subject of his meditations? He must have known very well that his father had made arrangements for the selection of a wife for him.

Most of the men among us would have been praying that the woman who came back with the servant would be of pleasant personality, that she would be pretty, that



she would be strong and healthy, and would be of godly nature. I think Isaac was no different.

GEN 24:64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

After coming to the end of the long journey from Mesopotamia Rebekah finally gazed into the distance and saw her husband to be, Isaac. She already knew who he was shortly after she first laid eyes upon him. She alighted from the camel upon which she was riding.

GEN 24:65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

The reason she knew who he was resulted from her asking the servant who it was that was walking toward them in the field. He had explained that it was truly Isaac.

Rebekah took a vail and covered herself. This vail could have been a covering for the eyes and the face. It could also have gone farther. The covering which a new bride wore when being presented to her husband was sometimes a complete garment which covered the entire form. The time would come when he would see her in all her beauty. In the meantime, she would declare her modesty.

GEN 24:66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

The servant recounted to Isaac all the wondrous things which had taken place. It had been a very profitable trip. God had been with him from the beginning. He had found Isaac a wife. She had consented to fill that role.

I cannot help but wonder what the ladies who read this account think about it. Rebekah left her family to marry a man whom she had never seen. She might never see the family again. She did know that God was guiding the two of them together. She was ready to place her life in God's hands.

GEN 24:67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Sarah had died and her tent was ready for occupancy. The marriage was consummated and fortunately both the bride and the bridegroom were well satisfied with the way things turned out.

Rebekah was a great comfort to her new husband. Any good wife will recognize just how much strength and comfort she can provide to her husband. Any good husband will recognize just how much he needs the comfort of a godly wife.

The scriptures have now brought us to the second of the three names that are so often linked together. We have seen the promise given to Abraham. We are now ready to see it passed on to Isaac. Later we will be told of it's transfer to Jacob and his descendants. God's plan is moving forward.



Chapter 25

GEN 25:1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

Very little is said about Isaac when compared to the large amount included concerning both Isaac's father Abraham, and Isaac's son Jacob. This is surprising in view of the number of times Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are listed together in reminding readers of the promise given through all three. The reason seems to be that Abraham was the father of the faithful and the origin of the nation of Israel. And that Jacob was the immediate father of the twelve princes of Israel.

There is disagreement here as to the sequence of events. The question is whether Abraham married Keturah before or after the death of Sarah. If both Sarah and Abraham were too old for childbearing when Isaac was born through supernatural intervention, how is it possible that Abraham could sire six sons by Keturah after Sarah was dead?

The answer provided by those who believe he married Keturah only after the death of Sarah is that Abraham was not rejuvenated sexually for the single event of Isaac's birth, but the rejuvenation lasted for a number of years. A response to this argument is given that Keturah is several times called a concubine rather than a wife. This verse calls her a wife. Other passages refer to her as a concubine (See verse six of our present chapter, and also I Chronicles 1:32).

GEN 25:2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

GEN 25:3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

GEN 25:4 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephah, and Hanoah, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

GEN 25:5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

The only one of these sons of Keturah that is of more than secondary interest is Midian. Moses spent some forty years herding flocks in the land of Midian before God called him to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

At the death of Abraham Isaac became the heir of all the possessions of his father. He was obviously in a class by himself. He was the son of Abraham's true wife, Sarah.

GEN 25:6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

In general, these tribes seem to have been located eastward and southeastward of the land of Canaan.

The sons of Keturah did not receive equal inheritance with Isaac. They were the sons of a concubine and not a true wife.

GEN 25:7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

GEN 25:8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

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The age of men at death has by now drastically decreased. Noah lived to be 930 years of age. Methuselah reached 969 years. Abraham died at the age of 175 and is said to have been full of years and an old man. Careful examination will reveal that this was not uncommon at that time. The age at death after the flood was sharply reduced and then it gradually decreased from that time forward, until in our present days three score and ten, or 70 years is considered old age.

**GEN 25:9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;**

Since Ishmael and Isaac had fought with each other from before the time of their birth, this is a remarkable statement. What was it that brought them close enough together that they were able to cooperate in the burial of their father? I ask the reader whether he or she has any estranged persons in their own family? There may still be hope. Sometimes burials will bring those together who have been at odds for decades. Do not give up hope!

**GEN 25:10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.**

Abraham had used foresight in purchasing the cave of Macphelah for a burial ground. He had buried Sarah there. Now he would be laid to rest beside her in the cave.

**GEN 25:11 And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.**



This is typical of the references to the life of Isaac. After detailing the matter of Isaac's marriage with Rebekah, further accounts of events in his life are very brief.

**GEN 25:12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham:**

Notice that Hagar is not called Abraham's wife. She is Sarah's handmaid. Hagar and Keturah did not take the same level of importance as did Sarah.

**GEN 25:13 And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,**

**GEN 25:14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,**

**GEN 25:15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:**

**GEN 25:16 These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.**

**GEN 25:17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.**

**GEN 25:18 And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.**

The main reason for listing these twelve sons of Ishmael seems to be a reminder that God keeps his

promises. In Genesis 17:20 we recall that God had promised Abraham that he would make Ishmael a mighty people and that twelve princes would come from him. Here is the account of the promise kept.

The infighting between the descendants of Jacob or Israel continue to fight with the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs, from that day to this. This has been a very bitter history.

**GEN 25:19 And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac:**

After quickly listing the twelve sons of Ishmael, the record turns to a much more lengthy account of Abraham's descendants through Isaac, particularly the relationship of Jacob and Esau.

**GEN 25:20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.**

**GEN 25:21 And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.**

We shall see later that Isaac was sixty years of age when the twins were born. He had waited for twenty years without a son through whom the promise of God could be kept. Both Abraham and Isaac were forced to show much patience in waiting for God's promise to be attended to.

Isaac did the wise thing. Rather than losing his faith in the fidelity of God, he turned to Him in prayer



that Rebekah would bear a child. His prayer was most definitely answered. Rebekah conceived twins.

**GEN 25:22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.**

Rebekah was having a very difficult time with her pregnancy. The two babies were struggling with one another even before birth. She apparently did not know the reason for her discomfort. She went to God to find the answer.

**GEN 25:23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.**

God's answer to her question was in the form of a prophecy. Within her womb she was carrying the father's of two great nations. The time would come when the younger of the two would become stronger than the older, and the people of the older babe would serve the people of the younger.

This was surprising. The older child was normally more prominent in Old Testament days. He received the birthright. He had a double portion of the inheritance. He was given responsibility for leadership in the family when his father passed on.

**GEN 25:24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.**





Rebekah carried the twins to full time. Then she found God’s statement to be accurate. There were two baby boys.

**GEN 25:25** And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

The firstborn was red headed! Not only was he red headed. He was covered with red hair as if it were a garment. Because of the abundance of hair, he was given the name Esau which means “Hairy.”

**GEN 25:26** And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

The second child was then born. He was born almost at the same time as Esau. The births were so close that the younger was able to clutch the heel of the older as they emerged. The second was named Jacob because he was a “heel catcher.” He was attempting to catch up with his older brother. This pattern held until finally Jacob was able to supplant his older brother in gaining of the birthright.

As mentioned previously, Isaac had waited from the time he was forty until he was sixty for the birth of the promised son.

**GEN 25:27** And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

As time passed Esau became a lover of the outdoors.



He enjoyed hunting and working in the field. Jacob was the opposite. He chose to spend his time inside with his mother.

The word used to refer to Jacob is the same word which is used to speak of Job as being “perfect.” The translators should have been consistent. It appears that they wished to show a vivid contrast between Jacob and Esau and therefore decided to translate the word here as “plain” rather than perfect. This does make a difference in our general picture of Jacob.

**GEN 25:28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.**

We now have a “momma’s boy” and a “daddy’s boy.” This is never good. Enmity and jealousy often develop under these conditions. Partiality brings forth much division within families. It sometimes lasts for a complete generation or more.

Esau would bring his father Isaac venison to eat. This pleased Isaac and caused him to favor Esau.

**GEN 25:29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:**

Jacob had become a cook. He was cooking soup one day when his brother Esau came in from his work in the outdoors. Esau was tired and very hungry.

**GEN 25:30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.**

Esau observed the delightful red soup which Jacob was stewing and asked for some of it. For the moment



that was all that occupied his mind. The soup would refresh him and make him feel much better.

Because of the color of the pottage, or soup which Esau desired, he came to be known also as Edom. He then became the ancestor of the Edomites who refused Israel entrance into Canaan after the wilderness wanderings.

**GEN 25:31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.**

Jacob had been patiently waiting for a long time to find just such an opportunity. He had envied his older brother from the earliest days. Here was the opportunity to obtain that for which he had longed. He offered to buy the birthright and would give sell Esau the red pottage for the birthright.

**GEN 25:32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?**

Esau quickly agreed. After all, he was so hungry he could die! Was he really that hungry? No, he was just so much more interested in the soup than he was in the birthright that he chose the profane and material over the spiritual. Paul spoke of this terrible mistake in the book of Hebrews.

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears (Heb. 12:16-17).

**GEN 25:33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this**



**day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.**

To insure that the contract was signed, sealed and delivered, Jacob required Esau to make a sworn statement that the birthright belonged to Jacob. Esau agreed.

**GEN 25:34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.**

Jacob kept his part of the agreement. He gave Esau some of the pottage. What a deal! Jacob got the birthright with all that pertained to it. Esau got a bowl of “bean soup.”

Although we cannot commend Jacob for his conniving ways, we do see a contrast between the value systems of Jacob and Esau. As Paul stated, Esau was a “profane” man who despised the spiritual when it was compared to the here and now of the pleasures of this world. Jacob had his eye on the spiritual birthright which would transcend his own generation and extend until the end of time.

We do not advise the reader to follow either the profane world of Esau or the subtle world of Jacob. We do advise choosing the eternal spiritual values over the fleshly appetites and lusts of the world.

## *Chapter 26*

**GEN 26:1** And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

The events of this chapter occurred about one hundred years after those of similar nature had appeared in the days of Abraham. In spite of the doubts of some modern scholars (?), these were two separate famines. The Bible distinctly declares this one to be beside the first famine of Abraham's day.

Isaac had fallen heir to the vast possessions of Abraham. He had large flocks and herds. These animals would soon perish without pasture and water. Isaac, just as Abraham had done, decided to seek out greener pastures.

Isaac set out for Philistine territory which was located to the northwest of Beersheba where he had been living. This was near the seacoast where there was a more adequate supply of water. The king of the Philistines was named Abimelech. This appears to have been a name similar to our names such as president or general. This Abimelech is not likely to have been the same as the one Abraham made a covenant with in earlier days.

**GEN 26:2** And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

God had instructed Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to a land which God would show to him.

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It was later explained that this was the land of Canaan. God had no intentions of allowing Isaac to go to Egypt as Abraham had done. He made an appearance to Isaac and told him to remain in Canaan.

GEN 26:3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

God reminded Isaac of the promise He had made to Abraham that he would be with both him and his seed, and that he would give him that land for his own. He would not forget that covenant. Nor was Isaac to forget it.

GEN 26:4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

Was the promise to Abraham to last until the end of time? Does the land of Canaan still belong to the fleshly descendants of Abraham? Or did this land promise come to an end when Christ died upon the cross and provided a blessing to all nations through the power of his blood and the replacement of the law of Moses by the New Testament of the Lord?

Many religionists today believe the fleshly Jewish descendants of Abraham are destined to provide a blessing to the nations through the Jewish race as a whole. However, the blessing will come through the Seed (singular) which is Christ. (See Gal. 3:16)



Gal. 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

GEN 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

It is interesting here that long before Moses received the law on Sinai, God had made commandments, statutes and laws known to Abraham. Sometimes this was done through divine appearances. Otherwise we could only speculate. We are told that truths are sometimes written on men's hearts, as the validity of those truths become evident to any man or woman who will observe the workings of God's creation carefully.

GEN 26:6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

Gerar was the capitol of the Philistine territory. It was about as far from the heart of Canaan as one could get and still say he was dwelling in Canaan. This reminds us of the attitude some Christians take with respect to the world. They feel cramped at the thought of making sacrifices for the glory of God, and so they live just as close to the edge of the kingdom as they can without deserting it completely. It seems from the following series of events that God felt the need to point out to Isaac that such a way of life is not pleasing to Him.

GEN 26:7 And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.



Just as Abraham had done in days gone by, Isaac feared that the men of the Philistines would kill him for his wife Rebekah if he was to admit that she was his wife. This was a lack of faith in God. Or else it could have been brought on by a guilt feeling over having looked lightly at God's command to remain in Canaan.

Was Rebekah really so beautiful that men might have desired her enough to kill for her? Although she was well past the age when women in the twentieth or twenty-first century would cause that kind of actions on the part of men, we must remember that those of that day were living well past one hundred years of age. Rebekah was clearly still very attractive.

GEN 26:8 And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.

We are not told just how long Isaac had spent in Gerar before the next happenings took place. We only know it was a long time.

At any rate, Abimelech happened to look out of a window to see Isaac making love to Rebekah. We wonder about the details of what happened. How was it that Abimelech could look out a window and see this sight? Was he at a height where he could look down and see the two within what they thought was a private location, or were they quite careless about where they made love.

If you object to my making it this strong with respect to what was going on that the Bible describes as "sporting" do not miss the fact that whatever they were



doing caused Abimelech to be certain they were man and wife. They were not just flirting! It is not impossible that Abimelech had suspected they were married even before this.

GEN 26:9 And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.

Abimelech immediately faced Isaac with the facts. Here were he and Rebekah, who were man and wife, lying about their relationship. This was a matter for shame. How could Isaac have considered such deception?

Never should a sinner have occasion to rebuke a Christian for shameful ways. The sinner may make false accusations against the Christian. But he should never have justification for such shaming.

I was extremely close to a man once who watched Christians like a hawk to see if he could find any hypocrisy in their lives. On occasion he did find such flaws and he did not hesitate to bring it to their attention. Let those of us who claim to be the followers of the Saviour see that any slips are just slips and not deliberate deceit.

GEN 26:10 And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.

Abimelech may have heard of the horror which befell his people when God shut up the wombs of the women in the time of Abraham. He definitely did not wish to bring the displeasure of God upon his own subjects.

GEN 26:11 And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

Abimelech made certain that none of the Philistines would either take Rebekah, or harm Isaac. The sentence for doing so would be to die.

GEN 26:12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.

Here is the first mention of sowing in the Bible. Jesus later had much to say about seed and sowing. Up to this point it seems that shepherds just wandered about looking for pasture for their flocks and herds.

Even though Isaac had acted in a manner which would lead us to think God might have brought misfortune upon him, we are told that his crops brought forth in great abundance. Yes, sometimes the Christian who is not all he should be does reap blessings. Still, behind the scenes God has his ways of seeing that corrections are made. That will be true in the case of Isaac.

GEN 26:13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

Isaac was already rich. Now he became even more prosperous and powerful. This would prove to be a point of envy on the part of the Philistines. All is not roses. There are some thorns hidden close by.

GEN 26:14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.



Here was a foreigner who had brought his livestock into the area and was living deliciously at the expense of the natives. Their pastures were suffering while his animals became fat.

GEN 26:15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

How does one handle a problem such as the Philistines faced? One answer is to stop up the wells in the area so the envied one has no water supply.

Isaac's father, Abraham, had received permission from the Abimelech of his day to dwell in that land and he certainly had permission to dig wells for his stock. The stopping of the wells was a breach of the covenant which had been made with Abraham.

GEN 26:16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

Abimelech recognized the danger of open violence. He came to Isaac and requested that the man remove his stock from the area. It was clear that the number of men under Isaac's leadership was also becoming larger. This could well provoke warfare.

GEN 26:17 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

Did Isaac respond with threats of retaliation? Not at all! He simply departed from the city of Gerar and moved farther down the valley. Here is an example of

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true meekness. God will ultimately reward the meek. He tells us they meek shall inherit the earth.

**GEN 26:18** And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

Isaac quietly opened up the wells which Abraham and his herdsmen had dug in previous years. It did not cause him to declare war over the fact that the wells had been stopped by the Philistines. He even called the redug wells by the same name his father had given them.

**GEN 26:19** And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

While this was going on Isaac's men happened upon a particularly valuable well. It was an artesian well which bubbled up as a fountain of fresh water. Now he had the supply which he needed badly.

**GEN 26:20** And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

Again the Philistines condemned him and claimed the well as their own. Isaac named this well "Esek", which means "strife."

**GEN 26:21** And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.



Rather than creating a scene, Isaac moved on farther away from the city of Gerar. That did not help the situation. The Philistines also were ready to fight over this one. Isaac called this well “sitnah”, which means “enmity”.

**GEN 26:22** And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

With an unbelievable amount of patience, Isaac move on again and dug a third well. This time the Philistines did not quarrel over it. Therefore he called this well “Reheboth”, meaning “room.”

Dear reader, did it occur to you that Abimelech had come to Isaac requesting that he depart because there was danger that he was becoming more powerful than the Philistines? Isaac could have retaliated. He did not! Let us give him due credit.

**GEN 26:23** And he went up from thence to Beersheba.

Isaac decided to return to the area where he had been when the famine struck. It may be that by this time the weather had improved and the food supply was better.

We can only wonder what would have happened if he had remained near Beersheba rather than going down to Gerar of the Philistines. God had looked upon that move as dangerously close to moving on to Egypt. That danger was now removed.

**GEN 26:24** And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham

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thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

As soon as he arrived back at Beersheba God restated the promise he had made to Abraham. He would be with Isaac, the seed of Abraham. He would bless him and give him many descendants.

Each time God goes back over the promise, He words it slightly differently because of the circumstances under which it is given. But always He includes the seed promise.

GEN 26:25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

Right away Isaac chose to build an altar at which he could call upon the name of Jehovah. He realized the importance of being able to offer sacrifices and praying. God had promised to be with him. He was ready to depend upon God.

GEN 26:26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

Abimelech wished to mend any weaknesses in the relationship between his men and those of Isaac. He came to Isaac, along with the top man in his fighting forces. He seems to have been a little nervous about possible future conflicts.

GEN 26:27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore

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**come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?**

Isaac was somewhat surprised. After all he had been advised by Abimelech to get out of the vicinity of Gerar. Isaac had done that. Why would Abimelech now come to him?

**GEN 26:28 And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;**

Both Abimelech and his chief captain agreed that there was good reason to make a nonaggression treaty. It been well proven that God was with Isaac and his people. They did not wish to fight against God. That was excellent reasoning!

**GEN 26:29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD.**

The statement made in this verse is quite off base. The men of Abimelech had made life very miserable for Isaac. They had made it necessary for him to move from one place to another, constantly opening wells for his livestock. It is true that they had not injured he or his men physically. However, that was the result of Isaac's meek spirit and not some desire on their part for peace.

**GEN 26:30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.**

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A peace agreement was right in line with the thinking of Isaac. He prepared a feast for the two of them and they shared a hearty meal.

GEN 26:31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

The next morning they made their covenant and separated from one another. Isaac was near Beersheba and Abimelech returned to Gerar.

GEN 26:32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

God was pleased. Isaac's servants had once more been digging a well. They came to Isaac informing him that they had been successful. They had found the water they were seeking.

GEN 26:33 And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.

Shebah means "oath." Beersheba has the meaning "well of the oath." Travelers in the land of Canaan can observe a well even today that is said to be the same well that was dug and named at that time.

GEN 26:34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

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Esau then made a very serious mistake. He took two wives from among the Hittite people. The Hittites were a polytheistic idolatrous people. When God's people intermarry with those who ignore Jehovah and his commandments there is strong tendency to participate in their rebellious life style.

**GEN 26:35 Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.**

Isaac and Rebekah were quite right to grieve over the choice Esau had made. Esau's descendants, the Edomites, gave Israel much anguish of heart for many centuries.

As we conclude this chapter it is well to notice that it includes almost everything that is said about Isaac. Although God introduces himself over and over as "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", far more is revealed about both Isaac's father Abraham, and his son Jacob than about Isaac himself.

## *Chapter 27*

**GEN 27:1** And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.

We have come now to a chapter that is quite distressing to those of us who like to look up to Bible heroes. The weaknesses of great men and women are demonstrated very fully in the next few verses of the holy scriptures. Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob are in general considered to be among the faithful of the ages. It is not pleasant to read of their frailties.

But God is sometimes brutally honest in picturing the imperfections of such persons. We are reminded that if such men and women could succumb to the wiles of the devil, the rest of can do the same.

The years had crept up on Isaac. Those of us who have advanced in years will sympathize with him. The eyes do not see as clearly as they did when we were twenty. The ears do not hear as acutely. We begin to wonder how many years we have left before a vital process fails completely and we die. Isaac was having such thoughts.

The man was not correct about his approaching demise. He would not die for many years after this. However, he had begun to fear the time and feel that he needed to make preparations.

Isaac called Esau, who is called his eldest son. It is true that Esau was the firstborn, but not by much. He and Jacob were twins, and the birth of Jacob was so close

behind that we are told Jacob took hold of the heel of Esau during the birth process.

**GEN 27:2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:**

Isaac began to explain to his son Esau that he was reaching old age and might very well die soon. It is already apparent that he considers Esau to be “his son.” He had developed a special fondness for Esau which was not the case with Jacob.

**GEN 27:3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;**

Esau was a hunter. He enjoyed the open air and the ruggedness of the fields. He had been in the habit of going hunting and bringing that which he had taken home to be eaten by his father Isaac. Venison is deer meat. It took a skillful hunter to bring down a deer. The bow and arrow could make this possible.

**GEN 27:4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.**

Now Isaac revealed why he had called Esau to him. He desired that Esau bring him some deer meat which he found especially tasty. After he had eaten, he would pronounce a blessing upon the younger man.

We are not told at this point whether or not Isaac thought he was bypassing the birthright which Jacob had previously purchased from Esau in exchange for a bowl of red pottage. From the series of conversations which occur later, it suggests that the blessing Isaac



wanted to confer upon his favorite son was perhaps the birthright.

**GEN 27:5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.**

Rebekah heard what Isaac had said to Esau, whom we are reminded again is spoken of as Isaac's son. This was not at all pleasing to her at all. As soon as Esau had left on his hunting trip Rebekah went into action.

**GEN 27:6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,**

Notice closely now. Rebekah spoke to "her son" Jacob. I suppose we would rather not know how many divisions have been created in families as a result of one parent favoring one child, and the other parent favoring a different one. The problem is crystal clear here as the Bible lays it out before us.

**GEN 27:7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.**

Had Rebekah been eavesdropping when she heard Isaac tell Esau to go out and find the venison? Perhaps not. The dwellings were not as elaborate then as those in which we now live. It would have been rather easy for Rebekah to have accidentally heard the conversation. Sarah overheard a conversation between angels and her husband Abraham under much the same circumstances.



**GEN 27:8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.**

What would Rebekah suggest as a counter to the actions of Isaac and Esau? She is about to reveal her thoughts to Jacob.

**GEN 27:9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:**

Jacob was told to go to the goat herd and select two choice kids from the goats. Rebekah would cook them and make a delicious meal for her husband. Hopefully she would be able to accomplish this before Esau had time to find his deer and bring it in.

**GEN 27:10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.**

Everything seems so simple as Rebekah spells it out to Jacob. All he has to do is quickly get the kids from the flock and she will cook them and Jacob may receive the blessing rather than Esau.

**GEN 27:11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:**

Jacob realized that there were hazards involved. Although his father was old and his eyes were clouded, he might still recognize by his sense of feeling that the one presenting the food was Jacob and not Esau.



Esau was apparently very hairy. Jacob, by contrast, was extremely smooth skinned. Isaac would very easily note the difference. Jacob felt a sharp concern over what might happen if Isaac found out he was being deceived.

**GEN 27:12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.**

Not only would Isaac refuse to bless Jacob under those circumstances. He would probably go a step further and place a curse upon him rather than a blessing. He would like very much to receive the blessing, but he certainly did not wish to place his future in danger as he perceived what might possibly take place.

**GEN 27:13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.**

Rebekah informed Jacob that she was willing to take the full consequences if the plot was discovered. If a curse was pronounced, she would bear the entire brunt of it. All that Jacob needed to do was follow her directions to the letter.

**GEN 27:14 And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.**

It did not require a very long period of time for Jacob to obtain the young goats and bring them to Rebekah. Esau was no doubt still trying to find a deer that he

could shoot, even while his mother was cooking the goats for Isaac.

**GEN 27:15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:**

The deception was growing deeper and deeper. In order to leave as little room as possible for Isaac to realize what was happening, Rebekah and Jacob played another card. They would dress Jacob in the clothing normally worn by his brother Esau. They would even smell like Esau who spent much time in the fields.

**GEN 27:16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:**

Just in case Isaac wished for his son to come close to him where he could lay his hands upon him while pronouncing the blessing, the two of them put goatskin upon both Jacob's neck and his hands. These were the places where Isaac's hands would be most apt to make contact with his son. The goat skin was hairy like Esau.

We may wonder at Isaac not being able to tell the difference between the hairiness of his son and that of a goat. We must remember that the man was quite elderly. If his eyesight was so dim he could not determine which of his sons was in his presence, it may be that his sense of touch was also failing.

**GEN 27:17 And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.**

I must now ask the question, "Did not Jacob already have the blessing of the birthright through the right of purchase from Esau well before this?" It would seem that the birthright already belonged to Jacob and that there was no need to use deceptive methods to obtain it. It may be that the blessing here was something in addition to the birthright. Jacob seems to have made a distinction between them afterward when he complained that Jacob had first taken his birthright and then had followed that by taking his blessing. (See verse 36.)

At any rate, Rebekah prepared the fine meal from the goats and delivered it into the hands of Jacob. We note that again he is called "her son."

**GEN 27:18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?**

Jacob was by this time in full partnership with his mother. He carried the meal to his father and was ready to hand it to him. Isaac seems to have smelled a rat. He asked who it was that had brought the meal. He was expecting Esau. He was not certain this was Esau.

**GEN 27:19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.**

Jacob then told a bald faced lie. He flatly declare that he was Esau. Therefore he was the firstborn and had a right to the blessing. He encouraged his father to sit up and eat the meal he had brought. Then, after his father had eaten, he might pronounce the blessing on Jacob.





**GEN 27:20** And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me.

Isaac was somewhat surprised. He had not expected Esau to have found a deer so quickly and have had time to cook it and bring it to him. How come he had been able to accomplish that?

The lie became close to blasphemy at that point. Jacob declared that God himself had arranged the matter. He had caused him to come upon the deer sooner than would otherwise have been expected.

**GEN 27:21** And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

Jacob's fears had been well founded. His father wished to verify that he was conferring the blessing on the right person. He knew he could tell the difference in his two sons by the amount of hair on the body of Esau.

**GEN 27:22** And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

When Isaac had finished his investigation he was still not completely satisfied. His confusion resulted from the fact that the voice of his son sounded like that of Jacob. Yet, when he felt of the surface of his hands, he felt like Esau.

**GEN 27:23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.**

Isaac was finally persuaded that he had the right person before him. He was ready to bless Jacob.

**GEN 27:24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.**

Even at this point Isaac had second thoughts. He forced Jacob into reinforcing the falsehood. Are you certain you are Esau? Jacob's reply came back. "I am."

**GEN 27:25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine and he drank.**

Isaac desired that his son bring the meal to him in order that he might enjoy it and then follow the meal by stating the nature of the blessing.

**GEN 27:26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.**

Here are those words again. Though he was actually speaking to Jacob, Isaac thought he was talking to Esau, and therefore called him "my son." He wished to share an embrace with him as a show of affection.

**GEN 27:27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:**



The embrace solidified Isaac's confidence that this was truly Esau, his favorite son. Isaac's sense of smell was still sufficiently acute that he could tell the odor of the open field upon the garments which Esau had worn previously, but which were now worn by Jacob.

**GEN 27:28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:**

Any diligent farmer or worker in the fields would love to have received the blessing which Isaac pronounced upon Jacob. He was to have plenty of rain. The soil was to bring forth the best of produce. There was to be an abundance of both food and drink. The wine here does not have to be fermented. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words which are translated as "wine" can also refer to fresh grape juice.

**GEN 27:29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.**

Now the blessing reaches beyond the plenty of the fields. The one who was receiving the blessing was to become dominant over large numbers of people, even unto nations. As in the case of Joseph at a later date, his own brothers were to pay obedience to the recipient of the blessing.

Anyone who cursed this man would have a curse upon his own head. Anyone who blessed him would find himself being blessed.



All the while that Isaac was blessing Jacob, he was under the impression that he was thwarting the very thing he was actually bringing to pass. God has His own way of getting things done. All men do when they try to impede God's will is to make life miserable for themselves. God had already made it clear when the twins were born that the elder would serve the younger. (See verse 23.)

Isaac was well aware of what God had predicted. He made a terrible mistake in trying to prevent it. God is not mocked.

**GEN 27:30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.**

The deed was hardly completed before Esau came in with the venison his father had requested that he prepare for him. The joy of Isaac was to quickly turn to dismay.

**GEN 27:31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.**

I find it interesting that both Esau and Jacob had their finger in the kitchen. Esau had come in earlier and eaten the red pottage Jacob had prepared. Now Esau had cooked the venison to present to his father.

Esau proudly invited Isaac to arise and eat the meal, after which Esau expected him to place the blessing upon him. He had no idea of what had just taken place in his absence.



**GEN 27:32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.**

Isaac was stunned. What had happened? He was quite certain he had placed the blessing on the head of Esau; yet here was Esau ready to receive it! Esau made it certain that he was after the right of the firstborn with regard to the blessing.

**GEN 27:33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.**

We are informed that the trembling was not just barely visible. The old man shook and trembled and trembled and shook! He was coming to the realization that his plan to give to Esau that which God intended to be given to Jacob had failed.

He had blessed Jacob rather than Esau, and the blessing could not be reversed.

**GEN 27:34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.**

Esau was grief stricken. He pleaded with his father to at least give him a blessing also. Surely there was something his father could do to cause both of the two brothers to share the blessing.

**GEN 27:35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing.**

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The answer which came back from Isaac was not what Esau wished to hear. The action had been taken. Nothing could undo it!

GEN 27:36 And 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. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

The name "Jacob" has the meaning of "supplanter." A supplanter is one who takes the place of another. Esau was accusing Jacob of having taken two things that rightfully belonged to Esau. He had first taken the birthright. Then he had taken the blessing. This causes your present writer to believe there was a separation between the birthright and the blessing.

Esau then wished to know if there was anything at all which could be done to enrich his own life. From his past actions it hardly seems that he was concerned about any spiritual advantages. He had proven more than once that he was far more interested in the profane than in the spiritual side of life. The writer of Hebrews refers to Esau as a profane person.

Heb. 12:16-17 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

GEN 27:37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all



his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

By his placing the blessing upon Jacob, Isaac had denied Esau a part in it. He could do nothing about it at this point.

GEN 27:38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

Esau was unconvinced. Surely there must be something his father could do to enrich his life as he had done with that of his brother.

GEN 27:39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

Isaac responded that he could affect the life of Esau in some manner. He could assure that Esau would have plenty of food. He had been fascinated in the past with the open fields. He would have some satisfaction in being supplied with food from those fields.

GEN 27:40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

But now we come to a quite different prophecy. Esau would serve his brother just as Isaac had made clear during his blessing of Jacob. Esau and his descendants

would be of a violent nature, living by the power of the sword. They would serve the descendants of Jacob for a lengthy time, but the time would come when they would be able to throw off the servitude.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau. The reader is invited to examine the one chapter of the short book of Obadiah to see how this prediction did come to pass.

GEN 27:41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

The anger of Esau was so great that he desired to kill Jacob. He felt that his father was very near to death. He would not slay his brother until after his father had died. Nevertheless, after the mourning period for Isaac had passed, he would take his revenge. Jacob would pay with his life for what had happened.

GEN 27:42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

If Esau had maintained his silence and bided his time, he might have brought his hatred to fruition. He made the mistake of telling someone of his plans. When his words were repeated to Rebekah, she went into action. "Her son" must be protected from the intended murder.

She called Jacob to her and told him of the wickedness in the mind of his brother. As before she had a plan!



GEN 27:43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

Jacob must go back to the area from which Rebekah had come. Her brother, Jacob's uncle, was still living and he could stay with him for a few days and be safe there.

GEN 27:44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

No doubt, after a short while Esau would forget his malice and all would be well again. Little did she realize that she would never see "her son" again. He would not return for many years, at which time she would have passed on.

GEN 27:45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

It is true that when the two brothers met again at the return of Jacob when his father died, the two brothers cooperated in the funeral arrangements. Still, Rebekah paid a dear price for her subtlety. She should have taken God at his word at the time of the birth of Esau and Jacob when God said the elder would serve the younger. Men become altogether too doubtful about the power and constancy of God and His predictions. We do not have to help Him unless He requests that help. He had not done that with Rebekah.



GEN 27:46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

This last verse of the chapter indicates that Rebekah remembered God's statements in the past that his people were to refrain from intermarriage with the pagan people around them. Her excuse to Isaac for sending Jacob to the territory where her people were located was that she did not want Jacob to marry from among the women who served false gods. She would die if that were to happen.

Note please, that she did not even mention Esau in her concerns. He could have married anyone he chose and in fact he had. The next chapter will make that clear.

Chapter 28

GEN 28:1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

Isaac had apparently decided at this point that it was better to cease his attempts to bypass the will of God concerning the birthright. Rebekah had heard from the time the twins were within her womb that the elder would be subordinate to the younger. Her methods were not always as open as they should have been, but she did have a correct understanding of the transmission of the birthright. By this time Isaac was ready to follow her lead.

Several have pointed out the fact that very little is said of Isaac from this point on, even though he lived for many years after this. It is felt that this might have had something to do with his favoritism of Esau and his efforts to pass the birthright on to him.

GEN 28:2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

Abraham had been very careful to send his servant back to Padan-Aram to select a wife for Isaac from among the believers in Jehovah. Esau had taken two wives from among the Hittites. This had displeased both Rebekah and Isaac. Now Isaac was making an attempt to avoid this in the case of Jacob. Jacob was instructed to take a wife from the daughters of his mother's brother.

In our own day, we cannot help but wonder at the taking of a spouse from close relatives. We know of the

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dangers of mutational damage. This may not have been as dangerous in these earlier days of the human race because of the lesser number of mutations which had occurred.

We do know that our great grandmothers and great grandfathers often married close relatives because of the lack of movement from region to region over a lifetime. Close relatives were better known than any others.

**GEN 28:3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;**

When Isaac mistakenly bestowed the blessing upon Jacob previously, he spent more time on the land and flocks, rather than on the seed promise. Now he pronounced a blessing on the seed of Jacob that they might be large in number.

**GEN 28:4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.**

Even though Isaac is moving in the proper direction in talking of the seed of Jacob, he still seems to have more interest in the inheritance of the land. Do we see a lack of spiritual maturity in this behavior? He does refer to the blessing of Abraham, which did include his seed being a blessing to all nation. Perhaps he just did not mention that part of the Abrahamic blessing.

**GEN 28:5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.**



All of this may well give the reader the impression that Jacob was a young man of about twenty or twenty-five years at the time, and was only now mature enough to take a wife. There is more reason to believe he was in his fifties than in his twenties. However, since lives were longer at that time, it could be that the fifties corresponded to a young man in his twenties today.

Jacob started on his way to Padan-Aram, some five hundred miles away from Beersheba, where Laban, the son of his mothers brother lived.

**GEN 28:6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;**

When Esau found that his parents were so heavily grieved over his selection of two Hittite wives, he decided he must have made a major mistake in doing so. He did not fail to take note that his parents had charged Jacob to make a better selection.

**GEN 28:7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram;**

**GEN 28:8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;**

Jacob had already left. Perhaps, since Jacob was no longer in the picture, Jacob could do something that would bring him back into the graces of Isaac and Rebekah. He had not realized choosing from the daughters of Canaan would bring on such antagonism.

**GEN 28:9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.**

Jacob decided the answer to the problem was to take another wife, but this time it would be from his own kinsfolk. He therefore went to the daughters of his uncle Ishmael to add a third wife to his harem.

God allowed polygamy in those early days. He did not condone it. He created one wife Eve for one husband Adam. They were told to cleave to one another and become one flesh. Nevertheless, Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham. Many had multiple wives. Solomon had a harem of some one thousand women. Polygamy was unwise then. It is absolutely prohibited under the new covenant of Jesus Christ.

**GEN 28:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.**

The Bible leaves the scene of Beersheba now and follows Jacob on his journey northward toward Padan-Aram. It is a very long journey and traveling by foot or by camel, it would have taken nearly a month to make the journey. I am assuming he would be capable of traveling about twenty miles a day, for the approximately five hundred miles between Beersheba and Haran.

**GEN 28:11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.**



The sun had dropped down below the horizon and Jacob had traveled as far as he could as we pick up his trip. The Bible atlas will show about fifty miles from Bethel where he decided to stop for the night and Beersheba from which he started.

He selected some stones and used them for a pillow. Hopefully he had some garment which he could place over the stone to soften it.

Years before this, Abraham had stopped in this same location, which was then called Luz. He had built an altar at Luz in order to worship God.

**GEN 28:12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.**

It is not surprising that Jacob dreamed. With stones for a pillow it is a wonder he did not have a nightmare!

In his dream he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Angels were moving up from the earth and down from heaven on the ladder. Some make the mistake of thinking it would be impossible for a multitude of angels to simultaneously ascend and descend on a single ladder. They had supposed what Jacob saw must have been something like the citizens of Babylon built when they tried to build a temple which would reach up to heaven.

It is not necessary to help God out by changing a ladder to a ziggurat. We do not know how wide the ladder was. We do not know how many angels were moving up and down upon it. It is far more important for us to realize the importance of the lesson the ladder and the angels is teaching. God was watching, and was ready to use Jacob in his eternal plan for man.



**GEN 28:13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;**

It was not merely a number of angels that Jacob saw. Above the ladder he saw God Himself. God was reminding Jacob that he had been with Abraham, Jacob's grandfather, and Isaac, Jacob's father. In addition God would be with him and would see that the land where he was lying would come into the possession of he and his descendants.

At this point Jacob would hardly have realized that he would not see that land for some twenty years. He no doubt thought he would go to Haran and find a wife, and would then return within a few weeks or months. God could see much farther ahead.

**GEN 28:14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**

Now God spelled out just as clearly as He had done with Abraham and with Isaac, that the seed promise was to pass through Jacob. His descendants would spread throughout the earth. Through them would come a blessing to all nations, or all the families of the earth.

**GEN 28:15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.**





God loved to make the following promise. If you will be my people, then I will be your God. He was convinced that Jacob would be faithful to Him. As a result, He would be with Jacob in Padan-Aram and also when he came back to the land of Canaan. Until God's plans had come to completion, He would still be working through the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**GEN 28:16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.**

Jacob awoke with a new concept of the nearness of God. He had thought he was alone. He was not! God was with him. It would be good if all men could come to the realization that the all seeing eye of God is present continuously, and that the might hand of God is available to guide, guard and direct them through His providence.

Men do things they would not do if they realized God was watching. Men fail to do things they know they should do when they feel that no one will hold them accountable. The ladder Jacob saw was related very closely to the statement Jesus made when he said, "I am the Way the Truth and the Life." Christ descended from heaven to reveal God's will to men. Jesus ascended back into heaven to act as an intermediary in taking our prayers to the Father. In a sense, He is the ladder.

**GEN 28:17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.**

The word "dreadful" might well be translated as awesome. I am certain the events must have struck some

degree of fear and dread into the heart of the man. But, the general tone of the passage speaks more of respect and willingness to submit to the will of God than it does of dread.

A house is a dwelling place. Jacob had seen through the front door of God's heaven. He was properly impressed by what he had seen.

**GEN 28:18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.**

Very early the next morning the man made up his mind to honor God by setting up a stone as a memorial. He then anointed that stone with oil. When he passed back through, he would be able to find the place where Jehovah had appeared to him.

**GEN 28:19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.**

Jacob gave a new name to the location. In the time of Abraham, it had been known as Luz. Jacob gave it the name "Bethel." When one sees the letters "beth" in the name of a Bible place, it refers to a place or location. Often the location is a village or city. Examples are Bethlehem, Bethabara, and Bethsaida.

The events recorded here are referred to more than once in the scriptures. Bethel became a very well known place.

**GEN 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this**

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way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

GEN 28:21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

God had made a powerful and valuable promise to Jacob. He was ready to respond to that promise with one of his own. God had promised to be with him in his journey and see that he returned to Canaan. If God would do this for him, and would provide for his needs until that time, he would also make a return promise.

It is improper to criticize Jacob for using the word "if." The Hebrew can just as easily be translated as "since." Since God had promised to be with Jacob, he would promise to serve God.

GEN 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Obviously Jacob did not believe God lived in the stone he had set up for a pillar. Savages worship rivers, sticks and stones because they believe God dwells in these objects. Jacob set up the stone pillar as a reminder that this was the place where he had seen through the gate of God's heaven.

Chapter 29

GEN 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.

No doubt Jacob left Bethel and headed for Mesopotamia with mixed emotions. He had left his mother and father under stressed conditions. He had been instructed to go to Padanaram and find a wife from among his own people rather than to select one from among the Canaanites. While on the way, he had seen the vision at Bethel in which God promised to be with him. Thus, there must have been some degree of wonder as to what life held for him in the future.

He did not remain at home while a servant went in search of a spouse, as was the case with Isaac. He would do the selecting himself.

Actually he did not travel due east. He moved in a northeasterly direction as he came to the very area from which Abraham had departed for Canaan under instructions from God in days gone by. It is likely that he thought his journey would be but a matter of a few weeks and he would return home with his new bride. That was not to be the case. It would be some twenty years before he would go back to Canaan.

GEN 29:2 And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.

As he came near to his destination, he came to a well. Some believe it may have been the same well where Rebekah had watered camels previously. We have no way of knowing this to be true.

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It was in the heat of the day. Sheep owned by three different shepherds were lying near the well. Some wonder why they were waiting, rather than going ahead with the watering process. We are not given that answer. Was it because the great stone was too large for small shepherd boys to roll it away from the mouth of the well? To answer that question we would have to know the maturity of the shepherds and also the weight of the stone. God did not see fit to tell us.

**GEN 29:3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.**

It is easy to jump to a conclusion here that the shepherds watered their sheep at this point in time. That is not true. Verses three and four are simply telling why the shepherds gathered at that well. Later we will see the watering take place. Any time sheep were watered, the stone had to be removed, and was then replaced after the watering was completed.

**GEN 29:4 And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we.**

Jacob did not really address the shepherds as if they were young lads. His words sound much more like those to whom he spoke were grown men. The idea that they were too young and weak to move the stone is incorrect.

When asked from where they came, they replied that they were from Haran. This was the territory from which Rebekah had come and in which Laban still dwelt.

**GEN 29:5 And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.**

Jacob realized he was getting close to the end of his trip. He had intended to locate his kinsfolk. When he asked if they knew his uncle, they assured him that they were acquainted with him.

One question which has been asked about the ease of conversation between Jacob and the people of the area of Padanaram is worth noting. How is it that Jacob, who had spent his life in Canaan, was able to speak the language of these people of that land? The answer is probably that the language of Padanaram had been used to some degree by his parents and grandparents. He could have been capable of speaking both languages.

**GEN 29:6 And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.**

Jacob next inquired as to the health of his uncle Laban. He was told that he was in good health. The shepherds also added that one of his daughters, Rachel, was about to join them with the sheep which she tended.

This writer has pondered that fact that a beautiful young woman had been assigned a duty which carried a good bit of danger along with it. Wild animals had to be driven off. In addition, a young woman such as Rachel would be defenseless and quite at the mercy of evil young men who saw her as a target.

**GEN 29:7 And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.**

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Now it sounds more like Jacob is talking to young lads. He seems to be telling them what they ought to be doing. This would be out of place if they had been grown men. As he saw it, the day was hot and the sheep needed to be watered soon.

GEN 29:8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

They objected that it was not proper to water any of the sheep until all of the flocks who watered there had been assembled. Regardless of the degree of difficulty in moving the stone, it certainly was true that it was a very large one and it made sense to move it only once rather than repeatedly.

GEN 29:9 And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them.

In this same area Rebekah had watered livestock and had been directed to her husband Isaac. Now Rachel is similarly occupied and she is about to meet her new husband. Both of these young women were hard workers. Lazy women make poor wives. God's providence is evident in this entire series of events.

GEN 29:10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.



When Rachel appeared Jacob did not wait for assistance from the shepherds who were already there when he arrived. He moved the stone by himself, even though we are left with the impression that Rachel's flock was not the last one expected.

Could Jacob have suspected, even at this early point, that this was the woman for whom he had been searching?

It is made clear that Laban was Rebekah's brother and that since Jacob is the son of Rebekah and Jacob are cousins. This may not have been as genetically serious then as close family inbreeding would be in later centuries due to mutational damage which could show up at these later times.

GEN 29:11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

I hope that verse twelve and verse eleven are reversed in time sequence. Most men would be quite hesitant to walk up to a strange woman and kiss her without any introduction. I tend to think he told her who he was before he kissed her rather than afterward. In addition, I would guess that the kiss was on the formal side at this juncture.

Both Jacob and Rachel were excited over having met cousins whom they had never seen. Jacob wept with emotion.

GEN 29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.

Rebekah was just as thrilled as was Jacob. She ran to her father and informed him of what had taken place. Was Jacob left to watch over the sheep?

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**GEN 29:13** And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.

Laban was also eager to meet his nephew Jacob. He quickly went to meet him. Now we find more kissing. This time it is between two males. Those who live in more reserved countries may have difficulty with this. Yet, this was not out of the ordinary in the eastern countries, and this continues to be true until the present. Frenchmen commonly greet one another with a kiss on each cheek.

**GEN 29:14** And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

Laban manifested a show of hospitality. He was willing for Jacob to join his household for some time. During the course of this first month, we suspect that he noticed Jacob's interest in his daughter Rachel. He may have already begun to weave a plan together by which he might come out ahead.

**GEN 29:15** And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?

How nice of Laban to suggest that Jacob receive wages for the work he was doing! He seems like such a nice person! All Jacob has to do is name his price and he will try to make arrangements. Does this sound just a little like Jacob is about to reap as he had sown in his deception of his brother and his father?



**GEN 29:16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.**

Rachel was not Laban's only daughter. He had an older daughter named Leah. Dad's mind was already in a whirl. Leah was not married. Possibly this young man could be persuaded to take Leah as a wife.

**GEN 29:17 Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.**

There was a problem. Leah was "tender eyed." But Rachel was beautiful. Your present writer has great difficulty going along with those who say Leah's tender eyes were simply soft and dark with a tender way of looking at animals, etc. The contrast in this verse is entirely too sharp. Leah was plain in appearance. Her sister Rachel was just the opposite, being beautiful and very attractive. I see no way the Hebrew could negate that contrast.

**GEN 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.**

Jacob had already made up his mind that Rachel was the woman he had come to find. One month was enough to determine his affections. He immediately set out to bargain with Laban for the hand of this daughter.

He must have loved her immensely to have volunteered his services for seven years in order to receive her as his bride. Notice that it was not Laban who suggested the seven years. It was Jacob.

Just how much is a faithful loving wife worth? Any



man who has found the right woman will tell you in a moment that you cannot put a value on such a woman. She is priceless. Jacob was not putting the price too high. We do wonder how he was able to behave himself for seven years before taking her as his wife.

**GEN 29:19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.**

Laban was more than agreeable. He did not even mention the fact that he had an older daughter that the custom of the land said must be given in marriage before her younger sister. That information would be presented later, at the most appropriate time.

**GEN 29:20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.**

The Bible sometimes is a marvel of brevity. Seven years pass by and we have no hint of any specific events occurring during those years. We may rest assured, however, that God included that which was essential to our knowledge of his plan for man.

**GEN 29:21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.**

When the seven years which were agreed upon passed, Jacob boldly declared that he was ready to claim his bride. The wording used seems crude to us. It is doubtful that it seemed so to those in that time and place. The same wording is used in a number of other



placed in the Old Testament scriptures.

We cannot help but wonder what was going through Laban's mind. He had taken in a nice little profit for those seven years. Now he stood to lose both his daughter and his hard working nephew.

We must not sell Laban short. He was a man with an active mind.

**GEN 29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.**

It was common to hold a feast of celebration at the time of a marriage. The reader will remember the account of the ten virgins who were attending such a feast. Laban was not doing anything particularly unusual in sponsoring the party.

**GEN 29:23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.**

I wish to be as honest as possible in making comments on the Holy Scriptures. The upcoming passage is one of the most difficult in all of the Bible for me to understand. The entire chapter has a number of difficulties, but this one is the toughest of all.

Jacob and Rachel had fallen in love early in their acquaintanceship. They had passed through seven years waiting for the time to come when they could marry. They must have had hundreds of conversations during that time. It would seem that even in the case of identical twins, a man would be able to distinguish the voice of his beloved from all others. Why did Jacob not recognize that the voice of this woman was not that of Rachel?

Secondly, why was Rachel completely out of the



picture? Even if she was removed from the scene unwillingly and kept from appearing, it would seem that the Bible would have explained the reason for her absence.

One explanation which is given for Jacob's deception is that Leah was heavily veiled and it was in the darkness of the night that Leah was brought to him. I trust my Bible, but I confess there are major problems in this account.

**GEN 29:24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.**

Zilpah is introduced because later she was to be the mother of some of the twelve tribes of Israel. She will become a pawn in the game of jealousy that resulted from the deception of this hour. Polygamy was not pleasing to God. It was tolerated but produced serious problems in the case of Abraham, in the case of Jacob, and also in the case of Solomon.

**GEN 29:25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?**

Jacob was very unhappy over the deception. He had not served those seven years for Leah. He had served for Rachel who was his true love and was far more attractive than Leah. He demanded to know why Laban had treated him in such a deceitful manner.

The seed of deceit should have been well known to Jacob. He had planted it when he desired the inheritance of Esau. The chickens are coming home to roost now.



**GEN 29:26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.**

Laban had a perfectly valid reason to present. In that land the younger daughter was just not given in marriage before an older sister. He implies that Jacob should have been aware of such a custom.

That may well be true. Nevertheless, it would have been only right and just for him to have told Jacob at the beginning that if he wished to have Rachel for his wife, he would first have to work seven years for Leah and then another seven for Rachel. Laban did not make that point clear. He had outplayed Jacob at his own game!

**GEN 29:27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.**

The week here is not a week of seven days. The original language simply says fulfil her seven. Jacob was promised that if he served this second seven years he would receive Rachel to wife.

**GEN 29:28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.**

Here again the brevity of the scriptures is seen. Another week of seven years pass and Laban has run out of excuses. He gave Rachel to Jacob as his wife.

**GEN 29:29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.**



With each daughter Laban supplied a handmaid. A lot of women today would like to have had a handmaid supplied to cook, wash dishes and make beds. It is doubtful that they would have relished the idea of having the handmaid take over some of the wifely duties that the handmaids of Leah and Rachel assumed. As a result of each of the wives having a handmaid, Jacob is in the steady company of four women. Two were wives. Two were handmaids of the two wives. This was not a spiritually healthy situation!

**GEN 29:30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.**

If God had desired that a man have two wives he would have created two women for Adam in the beginning. When he said it is not good that man be alone, he was certainly not desirous that a man be found in the position Jacob was in.

I am inclined to believe that in view of this present verse, Jacob took Rachel as his wife at the beginning of the seven years, but felt obligated to serve Laban until those years were completed.

**GEN 29:31 And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.**

Here is another hard nut to crack in this chapter. Why did the Lord become a partner to the forced marriage of Leah. If He disapproved of the deceit it would seem that he would not have been concerned that Leah was barren. Yet He caused her to have children when He saw she was in danger of being a castout.

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GEN 29:32 And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.

When God opened her womb, He did not do it half way. She had four sons in succession here. After bearing the first of them she was convinced Jacob would love her as he did her sister. She named the baby boy “Reuben”, meaning “Behold, a son.”

GEN 29:33 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.

The birth of Simeon apparently did not bring the reaction from Jacob which Leah had hoped for. But, when she conceived and gave birth to a second son, she named him “Simeon”, meaning “Hearing.” She was certain God had heard her pleas.

GEN 29:34 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.

Although there must have been sexual union between Leah and Jacob to produce three sons. Leah named this third son “Levi”, meaning “joined.” She still felt she had no true union with Jacob as Rachel did. Perhaps this son would bring such unity.

GEN 29:35 And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD:



therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

Then a fourth son was born. Men often look forward to the birth of their firstborn son. Leah felt that surely God was to be praised for allowing her the privilege of giving Jacob four sons in a row. She named this fourth son “Judah”, meaning “praise.”

The plot continues to thicken. These four sons will be among the twelve patriarchs of Israel. Judah will be extremely important in that the Jews will take their name from him. In addition, it is through his descendants, Jesse and David that Jesus Christ entered into the world.

Chapter 30

GEN 30:1 And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

This chapter continues the record of the birth of Jacob's twelve sons who became known as the twelve patriarchs of the tribes of Israel. Four of them had already been noted in chapter twenty-nine. The only one of the twelve who is not included in either chapter twenty-nine or thirty is Benjamin.

By the time Leah had borne Jacob four sons, Rachel was becoming very distraught and envious of her older sister. God had seen that Leah was loved less than Rachel and had seen fit to allow Leah the privilege of giving birth while Rachel was unable. Rachel was so wrought up that she told Jacob he must cause her to have children, or else life was meaningless to her.

Rachel's statement was the same kind of exaggeration we all engage in from time to time. It is necessary to be cautious. While Leah produced five sons for Jacob, Rachel produced only two. She died when Benjamin, the latter of the two was born.

The envy in the heart of Rachel was a natural outcome of polygamy. God intended that a man have one wife, and no more. When either a man or a woman divides their attention among several sexual partners, trouble follows.

GEN 30:2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

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To say the least, Jacob was not pleased with Rachel's intimation that he was the one responsible for her failure to conceive. It would not be surprising if he had turned even less of his attention toward her than before.

Since Leah had given him four sons, it was unthinkable that it was his fault Rachel was barren.

**GEN 30:3 And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.**

What was Rachel to do? She did not hesitate to follow her request that Jacob give her children, with a request of her own. She would offer her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob and the children who were born would then sit upon her own lap and be considered as her own. Nothing the handmaids had was thought to be their own. Even their children could be claimed by their mistress.

**GEN 30:4 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.**

This verse indicates that a handmaid, such as Bilhah was actually considered to be a wife. However, she was not of equal stature with a wife such as either Leah or Rachel. No doubt Rachel realized there was some danger in offering her husband yet another bed partner, but she was desperate and this was the only solution she could find.

**GEN 30:5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.**

Things worked out as Rachel had hoped. Bilhah did produce a son. Rachel must have entertained a hope that



she was catching up with her sister. That could make things different.

**GEN 30:6 And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.**

Rachel's gratitude to God for allowing her a son through her handmaid caused her to name the child Dan, which means "judged." In her mind, God had judged her case and decided to favor her plea.

The reader will note that it was Rachel who had the privilege of naming the baby. It was her child, even though Bilhah had brought it into this world. We do something of this sort today when an adopted child is named by it's foster parents and is legally their child.

**GEN 30:7 And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.**

The baby producing contest was, at least for the moment, going in Rachel's favor. When she gained a second son through her handmaid Bilhah, she had two sons to Leah's four.

**GEN 30:8 And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.**

The fact that it was a serious competition which was going on between Leah and Rachel cause Rachel to name this son Naphtali which means "a wrestling bout."



**GEN 30:9 When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.**

Now it was Leah's turn to become concerned. Leah had ceased bearing children. Rachel only lacked two sons of equaling her total. She had taken note of the manner in which Rachel had handled the problem. Why was not sauce for the goose the same as sauce for the gander? She proceeded to offer her own handmaid, Zilpah, to Jacob. Perhaps by doing that she could stay ahead.

Now Jacob had access to four different women. With our knowledge of the normal male sexual appetite, it is possible that Jacob could have found himself in bed with a different woman every night for four nights in succession. That was an unhealthy situation either from a psychological standpoint, but also from a physical health standpoint. A disease of any one of the four women could have been spread to all four, as well as to Jacob himself.

**GEN 30:10 And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son.**

**GEN 30:11 And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad.**

Leah's counterattack also proved successful. Leah received a son through her handmaid. She called his name Gad, which means "lucky."

**GEN 30:12 And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son.**

**GEN 30:13 And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.**

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Zilpah had now equaled Bilhah's number. The handmaids were even. Jacob has four sons by Leah, two by Bilhah and two by Zilpah, making a total of six. Leah named this child Asher, which means "happy."

GEN 30:14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

Reuben was the oldest of the six sons. He had found some mandrakes, or "love apples" while he was helping harvest the wheat. These plants have a strangely shaped root which looks something like the body of a man. That may be the reason why they developed a reputation for being sexually stimulating. They are also sometimes called "May apples."

When Reuben found the mandrakes he took them home to his mother. He may have been old enough by this time to have heard his mother express her desire for more children.

When Rachel saw that Leah had some mandrakes, she asked for them. She may have decided that this was the advantage Leah had over her. If she had some mandrakes, she might also have children.

GEN 30:15 And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.

Rachel seems to have had some control over Jacob's bed partners. She offered to make a deal with Leah.



Jacob could spend the night with Leah if Leah would give her the mandrakes.

GEN 30:16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

The deal was completed and Leah was waiting for Jacob when he came in that evening from his work. She informed him that she had paid for his attentions in trade for the mandrakes. Jacob was agreeable. He spent the night with Leah. One wonders what went through his mind when he found out he was acting as a "hired man."

GEN 30:17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

Leah had tried hard. God took notice of her persistency and granted her a fifth son. This was Jacob's ninth.

GEN 30:18 And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

This time the name given to the child was Issachar, meaning "reward." This is not a proof that the mandrakes were responsible. It was the natural consequence of her having spent the night with Jacob.

GEN 30:19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son.

GEN 30:20 And Leah said, God hath endued

me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.

This time we have no mandrakes, yet Leah had another son. He was named Zebulun, meaning “dwelling.” Now, having given Jacob six sons, maybe he would be willing to dwell with her rather than being manipulated by her sister Rachel.

This is Jacob’s tenth son, and means that Leah was responsible for one half of the twelve patriarchs of the tribes of Israel.

GEN 30:21 And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

What is the reason for the mention of Dinah here in the midst of the listing of the sons of Jacob? It may be a precursor of the later story in which Dinah became involved with Shechem. See later in chapter thirty-four.

There were other daughters of Jacob. (See chapter 37:35).

GEN 30:22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

After seeing ten children born to her husband Jacob by three other women, Rachel finally will see the fruit of her own womb. This verse implies that God’s providential hand is involved in the birth of children. We fail to realize just to what extent the Divine Power influences our circumstances. God had some very good reason for postponing the birth of Rachel’s offspring. We are not told what that reason was.



GEN 30:23 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:

GEN 30:24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

The simple statement that Rachel conceived and bare a son sounds like more of the same to us as we read the account. It certainly was not so in the case of Rachel. This was a momentous occasion for her. She felt that the load she had carried for years was now removed.

Her great joy was shown in the name chosen for the child. The name was Joseph, meaning “he who adds.” Adam Clarke states that this is a prophetic statement which looked forward to the birth of Benjamin. Verse twenty-four certainly seems to support that conclusion. The birth of Benjamin will be recorded in the thirty-fifth chapter of Genesis.

GEN 30:25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

When Jacob left Canaan for Padanaram, he would have expected to find a wife and return to his homeland within a short period of time. It had now been fourteen years. He had cared for Laban’s flocks and herds and Laban’s possessions had increased dramatically. It was time that Jacob begin assimilating property of his own to insure the future for his family. Therefore, he requested that he be allowed to go home.

GEN 30:26 Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.

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All that he could truly claim for his own were his wives and his children. He reminded Laban that he had treated the man fairly and honestly. He wished to depart for Canaan.

**GEN 30:27 And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.**

Laban was very hesitant in agreeing to Jacob's departure. He replied that he knew very well things had gone wonderfully well for him while Jacob was tending to his livestock.

**GEN 30:28 And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.**

Laban had made a similar proposal to Jacob in the past. Jacob had then asked for the hand of his daughters in marriage. As far as we know Laban had run out of daughters. Consequently, he asked Jacob what he would like to have in the way of wages to remain with him and continue to care for his stock. Jacob could name his price and Laban would be ready to agree to it.

**GEN 30:29 And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me.**

The two men were both aware that Laban's prosperity was due to God's presence and care for Jacob. Jacob's words are almost an echo of what Laban had already stated.



**GEN 30:30** For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?

**GEN 30:31** And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock.

Laban repeated his question. What did Jacob wish be done for him if he would stay and serve more? Jacob replied that he did not wish for Laban to give him anything at all. He did have a plan to present.

**GEN 30:32** I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire.

There were goats that had spots and streaks on them. Most were solid color. There were sheep that were white, and there were a few others that were brown. Jacob proposed that any of the goats that were not of solid color be considered his. All the sheep that were brown would belong to him, and those that white in color would belong to Laban. That same day the animals would be separated from each other.

This would seem to be a very nice arrangement to Laban. The majority of the animals of such marking that they belonged to Laban and thus he came out far ahead in the agreement. This was not the usual Jacob talking. He would ordinarily have made more selfish plans. He did have the advantage of knowing by divine promise that he would prosper.



**GEN 30:33** So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

Jacob indicated that the arrangement was completely upright on his part. Laban would be able to check at any given time and determine precisely which animals were his and which were Jacob's.

**GEN 30:34** And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

**GEN 30:35** And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Laban agreed immediately that would abide by the proposal. How could he go wrong? Jacob would be continuing to care for his livestock. There were far more of his stock than of Jacob's. Everything was to his advantage!

**GEN 30:36** And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Laban had removed all of the brown sheep and the spotted and striped goats and driven them enough distance from the rest that there was no chance for Jacob's animals to interbreed with his own.



Jacob then cared for the stock which belonged to Laban. What chance did he have to prosper? Had he been outsmarted? Not by any means!

**GEN 30:37 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.**

Jacob cut rods from several different types of trees. He then peeled off bark and caused streaks of the inner wood to show through.

**GEN 30:38 And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink.**

He placed these rods where the goats could see them when they came to drink at the watering troughs. This was done that they might produce spotted and striped offspring after they had conceived at the watering troughs.

**GEN 30:39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.**

The results were favorable. The offspring were marked with spots and stripes.

Dear reader, do not attempt to accomplish this yourself. It will not work! Why did it work for Jacob? Because God's finger was in it. He intended that Jacob would be rewarded for his labor during those years he had worked for Laban.



**GEN 30:40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.**

Jacob then caused the sheep of Laban's flocks to face toward the brown sheep. This was intended to cause the offspring to be born brown in color. He kept his own separate and thus expected them to produce brown offspring, since his own flocks were made up of brown color.

All of this sounds very much like old wives tales. Did all of this prove effective because of Jacob's planning, or was it strictly a matter of God's providence working in the background? Whatever the case, the reader is advised to use genetic methods in today's world. Belief in the marking of newborn babies by experiences of their mothers during prenatal development has been discarded for many long years.

**GEN 30:41 And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.**

Jacob had one more device. He would place the striped and peeled rods before the cattle when the more robust animals bred. This, he felt would cause his own animals to be stronger and healthier when compared to those of Laban.

**GEN 30:42 But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.**

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GEN 30:43 And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

Due to the support of Jehovah, Jacob's flocks and herds increased rapidly. After a time, he had reached a high level of prosperity. He had both male and female servants. He had livestock in abundance. He could not be accused of deception. We are not told what the results were with respect to Laban's prosperity. There is reason to believe he did not suffer serious ill effects from the agreement.

Chapter 31

GEN 31:1 And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.

We can understand the concern of Laban's sons when they saw the ever increasing numbers of Jacob's animals. We are not told that the number of Laban's goats and sheep were decreasing, but we are made aware of the gap between the increase of Jacob's stock and that of Laban's. When the sons of Laban realized that Jacob came with nothing and was now prospering from the offspring of what was once Laban's property, they envied him.

GEN 31:2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.

It was not just the sons of Laban who were envious. Laban himself was painfully aware of the situation. He had begun to despise Jacob.

GEN 31:3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

Jehovah knew the time had come for Jacob to go back to the land of Canaan. Jacob had the wife he set out to find. He had wealth that had been gained over the twenty year period he had labored as he tended the flocks and herds of his father in law. He also had the blessing and the promise of God that he was to follow in

the footsteps of Abraham and Isaac in the building of a nation who worshipped and served the Lord of heaven and earth.

GEN 31:4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

Jacob was quite ready to depart. However, the removal of his family and his possessions from the area could pose real problems. Would Laban try to use force to take away all that he had gained? He decided to discuss the matter with Rachel and Leah to see what their reaction would be. In order to avoid a confrontation with Laban, Jacob called his two wives out to the field where he was tending the animals.

There is something revealing here with respect to the place of wives versus that of concubines or maidservants. Both Bilhah and Zilpah had borne children to Jacob. They were not consulted about the decision to leave. Rachel and Leah were consulted.

GEN 31:5 And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.

Jacob felt that his wives could easily see their father's animosity toward their husband. They could also see that in spite of Laban's attitude, God had continued to bless Jacob.

GEN 31:6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

It should also have been evident to the two women that Jacob had not shirked his duty. He had been very



conscientious in keeping up his end of the agreement with Laban.

GEN 31:7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

Laban had tried every trick in the book to obtain an advantage over Jacob. He had made Jacob work seven years for Rachel and then had given him Leah. After another seven years of serving for the hand of Rachel, it became necessary for Jacob to work another six years to accumulate some possessions of his own.

In spite of Laban's efforts, Jehovah had intervened to see that Jacob was not injured permanently.

GEN 31:8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

GEN 31:9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

It was not Jacob who had brought about the difference in productivity in the livestock of the two men. It was taking place as a result of the providence of the LORD. It was truly God who had done this thing and not Jacob.

GEN 31:10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ring-straked, speckled, and grisled.

GEN 31:11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I.

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**GEN 31:12** And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

Verses ten through twelve do not explain what was actually happening. This was only a dream. The dream did show that God was causing the cattle to be marked as Jacob's possessions because of the mistreatment Laban was attempting to bestow upon Jacob.

**GEN 31:13** I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

At the close of the dream, God commanded that Jacob honor the vow which he had made when he was on the way from Canaan to Padanaram. He was to have a special relationship with Jehovah. Jehovah would care for Jacob and Jacob would honor Him as his God.

Jacob was thus to keep that commitment and obey the command to return to Canaan.

**GEN 31:14** And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?

Rachel and Leah realized the time had come. With Laban's attitude being what it was, there was little chance that the two women would receive any portion of Laban's wealth. This would be true both while Laban was alive and also when he died.

**GEN 31:15 Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.**

A close look at what had happened indicated that Laban considered them no more than merchandise. Rather than being his precious children, he had actually sold them to Jacob for his services. They had received no gain from the transaction. They might as well accept the fact that they would never do so.

**GEN 31:16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.**

The wealth Jacob had gained had come to him because God had seen fit to cause that gain. If Jehovah had commanded that Jacob leave and go back to Canaan, they were ready to go with him.

**GEN 31:17 Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;**

**GEN 31:18 And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.**

Jacob hastened to put his words into action. He began to make arrangements for the departure. However, he considered it necessary to be careful about just when he left. He did not desire to stir up Laban's anger when he could avoid doing so.



**GEN 31:19 And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.**

Jacob waited until he knew Laban would be absent for some time during sheep shearing time. If the reader wonders why Jacob was not involved in this shearing it may be possible that the shearing was done by others who were skilled in that work. Jacob had been responsible for tending to both his own and Laban's animals, but this was a special occasion.

While her father was gone, Rachel decided she wanted the idols, or images, Laban cherished as objects of worship. Here is an indication that Rachel had absorbed polytheism to the extent that she placed confidence in other gods in addition to Jehovah. She did speak of Jehovah as God back in verse sixteen. Such polytheism led to much trouble for Israel in the days to come. They had been told to place no other gods before the one true God.

**GEN 31:20 And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.**

**GEN 31:21 So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead.**

Was the stealing away unawares wrong on the part of Jacob? No! He had a perfect right to leave at any time he desired. As we can see later, Laban would have made it as difficult as possible, had he been aware of what was taking place.

The "river" which is spoken of is the Euphrates. Padanaram lay in the land "beyond the river." There was no need to specify which river. All who know of Bible geography will recognize the Euphrates as in the



right location and of the right importance to be the one mentioned. There are those who worry about how Jacob could have taken his caravan across the Euphrates. This is not a serious problem in that the Euphrates is shallow enough in places where Jacob would have crossed that the crossing could occur.

Jacob set out for the mountains of Gilead which were about three hundred miles to the southwest of Padanaram. This was on the way home to Canaan.

**GEN 31:22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.**

**GEN 31:23 And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.**

It was three days before Laban found out his son in law was gone. This meant Jacob had a considerable head start. Laban was able to catch up with Jacob after seven days of travel. He did not have to deal with livestock. It took Jacob ten days and Laban seven days to meet at Mount Gilead.

**GEN 31:24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.**

God knew Laban was not about to take Jacob's departure without resistance. The man had both the manpower and the attitude which could cause injury to His servant, Jacob.

Therefore, God appeared to Laban in a dream with a direct command not to hurt Jacob. Not only was he not to do physical damage to him; he was not even to ask him to come back to Padanaram.



**GEN 31:25** Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

**GEN 31:26** And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?

The reader will note that Laban was impressed with what Jehovah had commanded in the dream. He did not attack him. He did not direct him to come back.

What Laban did try to do was to shame him by asking him why he had stolen away secretly. Why did he take Laban's daughters away as if they had been enemies and must be led away like captives.

The truth was that Rachel and Leah had been consulted beforehand and had revealed that they were quite ready to leave.

**GEN 31:27** Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?

**GEN 31:28** And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.

Laban scolded Jacob for not even giving him the opportunity to throw a feast with music and great ceremony. He indicated it was very unwise for Jacob to have denied him the right to kiss his descendants good-bye. That was not his real motive. He was angry that he had been bypassed with no chance to intervene.

**GEN 31:29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.**

Laban showed what was in his heart when he said he had the power to punish Jacob for behaving as he did. He would like to have made Jacob pay for his actions. He did not dare to do that. Jacob's God had forbidden it. He knew better than to ignore the command.

Here again we see the polytheism of Laban and his family. It was not the only True and Living God who had spoken to him. It was the God of Jacob.

**GEN 31:30 And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?**

There was still another matter which Laban needed to address. Some of his idol gods were missing. He accused Jacob of having taken them. It was understandable that Jacob wished to go home to Canaan and be with his family. But why did he steal Laban's gods?

**GEN 31:31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.**

Jacob was completely honest with Laban. He knew there would be trouble if he had allowed Laban to know he was leaving. Laban would have done his best to prevent that move, even if it required force.





**GEN 31:32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.**

Jacob made a bold challenge to Laban. If Laban could find his images with anyone in Jacob's camp the individual would be turned over to Laban to take his or her life. Both Jacob's companions and Laban's companions would be the witnesses to judge between the two. Who was right? Was it Jacob, or was it Laban?

This was a dangerous statement. Jacob did not know the actions of every person in his group. He could be certain he had not taken the images himself. He did not know whether or not any other had taken them. His statement included everyone, even his wives.

**GEN 31:33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.**

We do not know whether Laban searched the tents of various servants. We are only told of those close to Jacob. He searched Jacob's own tent first. Then he turned to the tent of Leah, and to the tents of both of the handmaids. The images were not found.

Now the danger begins. He was getting warm! He entered into the tent of Rachel.

**GEN 31:34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not.**

Rachel was the one who had taken the images. She was about as clever as Laban. She had hidden the images in the saddle bags of the camel, and then had sat on them.

The reader needs to be careful here. Rachel was in her tent. She was not sitting on the camel. The saddle bags had been taken off the came and carried into Rachel's tent. We would expect that within the saddle bags she had various personal items in addition to the images. Laban could not find the images in Rachel's tent. But there was one place he had not searched. That place was under where Rachel was sitting.

**GEN 31:35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched but found not the images.**

Rachel excused herself for not rising to let Laban search the saddle bags. She was in the midst of her menstrual period and because of that she claimed she could not rise up.

Rachel could very probably have risen if she had tried. Most women would not find this such a handicap that they could not stand up! There are a few who will take this as an opportunity to plead helplessness, but they are few.

There is another possible reason why Laban was hesitant to demand that she arise. Anything that a woman touched while in her period was considered to be unclean. He might have avoided examining the camel's furniture because of that.

**GEN 31:36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?**



Jacob had built up a sizable amount of wrath by this time. He had been previously restrained himself from venting it. Now he felt the need to defend himself and point out Laban's boorish behavior. He emphasized the fact that he had not done wrong in leaving as he had. Laban had no right to come after him with such words and actions.

**GEN 31:37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.**

If Laban had found any of his possessions in the tents of Jacob and his fellow travelers, this was the time to bring them forth. Both those with Jacob and those with Laban could act as judges as to whether or not Jacob was to be found guilty.

**GEN 31:38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.**

He had served seven years for Leah, seven more years for Rachel, and another six years in building up the herds, flock, etc. that he was now taking with him. He was justified in taking them.

**GEN 31:39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.**

Most shepherds were not held responsible for the loss of animals that had been killed by wolves and other  
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predators. Yet Jacob had seen fit to pay Laban for every one that had been lost.

GEN 31:40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

He had labored cold of the night and the heat of the day to care for that which had been appointed to him. He had even watched when by all rights he should have been asleep and resting.

GEN 31:41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

He had been abused by Laban over and over through the changing of the original agreement that the two had made.

GEN 31:42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

Jehovah had made a promise to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob himself that if they would serve Him faithfully, He would make them into a great nation and provide a blessing to all nations through them. The True God, who had made that promise, was taking care of Jacob and had warned Laban not to interfere with his departure.



GEN 31:43 And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

We come now to a drastic change in Laban's approach. If he could not intimidate and shame Jacob, he would make a covenant with him. He had a great investment in that which Jacob was taking back to Canaan. Rachel and Leah were his daughters. Their children were his own descendants. The livestock had come from his own herds and flocks.

His statement was that in view of what he had just said, he desired to do something for his family. This is interesting. He had not treated his daughters with great affection before. This gives reason to doubt the sincerity of his present words.

GEN 31:44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

Laban proposed that the two men make a covenant with one another. Then they would be bound by the promises and conditions of the covenant.

GEN 31:45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.

Jacob agreed with the proposal. He found a large stone, probably long so that it could be stood on end. This stone was to act as a memorial which could be seen by those who passed by in time to come.



GEN 31:46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

Then Jacob commanded that those who were with him collect stones and place them in a pile. Although it is not stated, the stones were likely piled around the base of the pillar.

A covenant was often initiated with a feast. This was the case here. We might note that even today we have a form of this in effect. God has made a new covenant with his people. Every first day of the week Christians assemble for worship services. During the worship each partakes of bread which represents the body of Jesus Christ. Each also partakes of the fruit of the vine which represents the blood of Jesus Christ.

GEN 31:47 And Laban called it Jegarsa-hadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.

Laban called the memorial Jegarsahadutha, meaning “the heap of testimony.” Jacob called it Galeed, meaning “the heap of witness.” The two names are so closely related that there is little reason to emphasize the difference.

GEN 31:48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

GEN 31:49 And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.



Laban also gave the pillar and the heap the name Mizpah, meaning “watchtower.” He called upon the Lord to keep a constant watch over the actions of both Jacob and himself when they were unable to watch one another.

GEN 31:50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

God was to see that Jacob not mistreat Rachel and Leah. It is not clear from this verse whether Laban is calling upon Jacob to refrain from taking any other wives, or whether he is saying he expected Jacob to care for Rachel and Leah even if he did take other wives. Your present commentator tends to believe Laban was extracting a promise from Jacob that he would not marry other women in addition to his daughters.

GEN 31:51 And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee:

GEN 31:52 This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

Laban made the promise that he would not pass over the memorial to do harm to Jacob. He expected Jacob to make the same promise toward himself.

GEN 31:53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.



Laban called upon Jehovah to punish either of them who would break the covenant. The God of Nahor was the same God as the God of Abraham. At this point Laban appears to have turned from his polytheism and idol worship to recognize the one true God of both of their ancestors.

GEN 31:54 Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

Jacob did his part in the establishing of the covenant. He offered a sacrifice to Jehovah and they ate and remained near the pillar and the heap throughout the entire night.

Throughout the years the word “Mizpah” has been a symbol of unity and peace. The reader must judge for himself whether or not this was a true peace or whether it was simply a matter of warding off the possible threats of the opposing parties.

GEN 31:55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

The next morning Laban prepared to leave and go back to his home in Padanaram. He kissed his daughters and his grandchildren and then departed.

Let us hope this display of affection was genuine. Laban had not shown sincere love for his daughters previously. But maybe the experiences of the past twenty years had mellowed him somewhat. The parting may have brought a touch of sorrow to his heart.



Chapter 32

GEN 32:1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

After parting from Laban, Jacob and his wives and children, along with a band of servants, started out for the land of Canaan. What unknown circumstances awaited them no one could predict. They were not a powerful army. They could possibly be at the mercy of a powerful force along the way.

In addition, Esau had threatened to kill Jacob when he had the opportunity. There was no strong reason for Jacob to believe Esau's attitude toward him had made a change.

Jacob needed strength beyond his own. God provided that strength. While on his way, Jacob was met with a band of angels. They had been sent from God to bolster Jacob's confidence that he was not alone in his journey.

Angels are constantly commanded to care for the needs of the faithful. That has not changed in New Testament times. Jesus replied to Satan that God had given the angels charge to protect him, lest he dash his foot against a stone. The writer of Hebrews agreed. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation (Heb 1:14)?

GEN 32:2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

Jacob proceeded to call the place where he met the angels "Mahanaim" which means "two hosts." One of the

hosts was his own visible company. The other host was the band of angels. God had given him evidence that he would be taken care of.

GEN 32:3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

Jacob decided it would be wise to send someone ahead to feel out the situation. He instructed them to go into the land of Seir, which is the same as Edom. Edom was named after Esau himself. It was territory to the southeast of the land of Canaan.

GEN 32:4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

For twenty years Jacob had been gone. His messengers were to tell Esau that he had been with Laban during that extended period when he was away from his true home.

GEN 32:5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

Laban was to be told of the possessions Jacob had accumulated while he had been away. If Esau had any misgivings about Jacob coming to take his material goods, there was no reason to continue that view.

GEN 32:6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he

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**cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.**

It appears that when the messengers informed Esau of the coming of Jacob, Esau decided not to wait for him to arrive, but to actually go out to meet him. Esau's hatred had cooled by this time and he was looking forward to seeing his brother.

When Jacob was told of the four hundred men who were with Esau, he had no idea that they might be a welcoming group ready to honor him.

**GEN 32:7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;**

**GEN 32:8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.**

Jacob's conscience appears to have been very much alive and well at this point. He had the name Jacob because he had supplanted Esau in the matter of both the birthright and the blessing. What would Esau do to him in retaliation?

He decided he must do all that he could to protect his troop from danger. I doubt that he had forgotten that God would give his angels charge over his safety. It is more likely that he felt he must do his part and then he could expect God to keep His promises.

He divided his group, and even his livestock, into two bands. If Esau attacked either of them, the other could get away to safety.

**GEN 32:9 And Jacob said, O God of my father**



**Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:**

Then Jacob did what any God fearing person ought to do when faced with danger. He prayed for help! His prayer is a model for us today. He recognized the eternal nature of God. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

He then told God that he remembered the promise that had been made to Abraham and Isaac that if they would return to Canaan, He would be with them and see that all went well.

**GEN 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.**

Jacob admitted his own unworthiness. He had passed over Jordan with nothing but the walking stick in his hand. God had seen to it that he was rewarded for his confidence and faith. He now had larger possessions which he would not have had without God's supervision.

**GEN 32:11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.**

Jacob is partly specific, and partly general in his request to Jehovah. He was asking for protection from Esau in case there was still hatred. At the same time, he did not specify how God was to deliver him.

We often find ourselves in similar situations in our



day. We know the severity of a problem and we have been told God will hear our prayer. But, we do not know how the problem may be solved, and so we asked that God's will be done in all things. He knows when we do not.

To smite the mother and the children was to completely annihilate everyone. It was a terrible thought to Jacob that his entire family might be wiped off the face of the earth.

**GEN 32:12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.**

If God were to allow such a massacre, it would be contrary to that which He had promised. The promise was that his descendants would be innumerable. Surely God would remember and honor that promise.

**GEN 32:13 And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;**

He did not go further that night. He camped and prepared a gift for Esau. Was this a bribe, or was it a true sign of friendship? The general context of all that was going on here indicates that it was an offer of real friendship and acknowledgment of kinship.

It has been suggested that when we are told he took of that which came to his hand he was in a hurry and did not choose either the best or the worst to make up the gift. I rather think that this phrase means he selected from what God had seen to place in his hand while he was serving Laban.

**GEN 32:14 Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams,**

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It was not mean gift. Five different groups of livestock were represented. There were sheep, goats, cows, camels and asses.

GEN 32:15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.

The thirty milk camels alone would have been an impressive gift. When the entire number of all these animals is considered, we begin to realize how much Jacob had accumulated while serving Laban.

GEN 32:16 And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.

He sent them drove by drove rather than in just one. Each drove was to wait until the previous one had time to be recognized and evaluated. Esau surely should have been impressed if such an impression could be made.

GEN 32:17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?

GEN 32:18 Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us.

GEN 32:19 And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him.



Each time the leader of a drove was asked the meaning of his drove he was to explain that they were a present, or gift, from Jacob. They were not just passing through the territory. They were an offer of friendship.

GEN 32:20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

Jacob made it clear that his intent was to break down any animosity which might still exist between the two. He desired peace.

GEN 32:21 So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.

Jacob did not accompany the gift he had sent. He remained with the rest of his group. He began the night with them.

GEN 32:22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

During the night he awakened Rachel and Leah, and also the handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah along with all of his eleven sons and all of the children. Benjamin, his twelfth son had not yet been born.

GEN 32:23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

We gather from this verse that Jacob had separated himself from the rest of the troupe. They were on one side of the river Jabbok and he was on the other.

GEN 32:24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

We are told here that the one with whom Jacob wrestled was a man. It is obvious in other places that it was an angel who had assumed the form of a man. Joshua saw someone similar who was called the "Captain of the Lord's Host." Joshua fell on his face and worshipped him. He was then told to loose his shoe from his foot for the place where he stood was holy ground. Hosea 12:3-5 is a reference to this event and calls the individual an angel.

Was this wrestling simply an effort on Jacob's part to obtain the help of the angel through prayer, or was it real physical combat. The latter seems to be the truth. Jacob was left with a limp which would not have been the case if the entire matter had been mental. This may well have been not just any angel, but "the Angel" of the Lord. It could have been the Christ in a pre-incarnation appearance. Jacob later said he had seen God face to face

GEN 32:25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

The angel did not prevail against Jacob. Jacob was insistent that he receive help. He would not give up until he had assurance that the help would come.



The angel then smote him in the hollow of the thigh and caused the thigh to come out of joint. Adam Clarke believes this referred to the groin area and says that if the blow had been sufficiently severed Jacob could have been killed. I cannot believe this was the case. The groin area would not come out of joint. Perhaps the hollow of the thigh was the area of the hip joint and the hollow was where the leg bends.

GEN 32:26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

Although none of us will expect to wrestle physically with an angel, it is true that God expects man to put forth a struggle in order to receive His blessings. We are not to give up just because we do not receive the blessing at the very time we ask for it. We are to pray without ceasing (Lk. 18:7). We are always to pray, and not to faint (Lk. 18:1).

GEN 32:27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

What was the blessing the angel could bestow upon Jacob? We shall see.

Jacob was asked his name. His name carried the meaning of “supplanter.” That was to change.

GEN 32:28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Jacob would no more be known as the supplanter. He would from now on be known as “Israel”, or “Prince with

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God.” His character had changed. If he had demonstrated power with God, he could rest assured that he could look forward to having power with men.

We know today that as “Israel” Jacob’s descendants have made a difference in the entire world. The Saviour came through Israel.

**GEN 32:29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.**

Jacob had been asked his name. He now turned the question around and asked the one with whom he had been wrestling what his name was. The name was not given, but the blessing was given.

**GEN 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.**

How can this statement be squared with the words of I John 4:12 which tells us no man has seen God at any time? Perhaps in the same way that we may understand Christ being called “God with us.” God can make Himself manifest to the eyes of men sufficiently that His divinity can be recognized. But, since God is a Spirit and spirits do not have flesh and blood, we humans must wait for the resurrection and the new spiritual bodies to go farther than did Jacob or the twelve apostles.

**GEN 32:31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.**

The next morning Jacob had certain evidence that what had taken place was not a vision or a dream. He

was physically handicapped and walked with a limp. He would not be likely to forget what had happened.

**GEN 32:32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.**

We have no record of God giving a command to Israel that they not eat of the tissue mentioned. This was apparently done of their own choice and served to remind them in time to come that God had reiterated His promise that a blessing would come through Jacob's seed.

## *Chapter 33*

**GEN 33:1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.**

The next morning after wrestling with the angel, Jacob looked off into the distance and saw his twin brother approaching in the distance with his four hundred men. Such a sight left him most apprehensive. He felt that he must make every precaution to protect his family as well as he was able. God would do the rest.

Each of his wives and handmaids was separated with her own children, resulting in four groups.

**GEN 33:2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.**

There are two suggested reasons why Jacob placed them in the order which he did. First, he may have desired to give the greatest protection to the ones he loved most. Thus his favorite Rachel and her son Joseph would have the greatest possibility of escape if Esau and his men attacked them.

Second, he may have wished to make an ever increasing impact upon Esau by placing that which would be least impressive in the forefront in their meeting. Either of the two suggestions is plausible.

**GEN 33:3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.**



Bowing seven times before his brother was not a sign that he felt inferior to him. The customs of that time and place considered it appropriate to greet a ruler or man of great importance in such a manner. The bowing is deep. The one doing the bowing bows and sometimes goes so far as to kneel and place the forehead on the ground. Then he may arise, move forward a bit and repeat the process.

Jacob was indicating his joy at seeing his brother, and also showing his desire for peace between the two. He must have wondered just what kind of greeting would be returned to him.

**GEN 33:4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.**

What a sense of relief it must have been to Jacob to see his brother running toward him, to feel his embrace and exchange kisses. The two of them were so overcome with emotion that tears flowed freely from the eyes of each.

As we have mentioned before, kissing was a common greeting between men in both Old Testament and New Testament times. In the New World we would consider it suspicious to see men kissing. It was not so at the time of Jacob and Esau.

**GEN 33:5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.**

Esau surveyed the scene before him. He was curious as to who this host of persons were. He asked their

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identity. Jacob replied that they were the children that God had given to him.

It disturbs your present writer that the general impression seems to be that God was pleased with Jacob's multiplicity of wives when in the beginning He created one man and one woman. It is said at one point that it was because of the hardness of men's hearts that God allowed writings of divorcement. But from the beginning it was not so.

Children come to us through the grace of God. Most couples desire a first or second child. As the third, fourth and others come along, there is concern over the breakdown of the mother's health and the need for adequately providing for them.

However, many couples have found that every child adds something to the home. Each is a gift from God and should be considered as precious. Jacob recognized this fact.

GEN 33:6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

The handmaidens are not named. It is as if they held a position of much lesser importance in the eyes of Jacob than did either Leah or Rachel. Each of the handmaidens and their children expressed their respect for Esau.

GEN 33:7 And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

Next Leah presented herself, along with her children. Finally, Rachel came with her son Joseph. Each bowed themselves, showing their respect.

This must have been a time of great joy. What had



been a feeling of fear reversed itself and was replaced by happiness.

GEN 33:8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.

Esau then asked about the meaning of the multitude of livestock that had been sent ahead in the form of gifts. He had no doubt been told by the men who accompanied the gifts that they were just that; gifts from Jacob.

He still needed to hear this from the lips of his brother. This meeting would have the effect of cementing their friendship in the time to come.

GEN 33:9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

Esau politely refrained from accepting the gift, stating that he did not need the gift. He had all that he needed without receiving more from Jacob.

GEN 33:10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

Jacob would not take no for an answer. Esau's refusal to receive a gift would have left some doubt as to whether the happy reunion was completely genuine. He insisted that Esau's friendship was very precious to him. His exaggeration in saying that it was like seeing the face of God to see the pleasant face of his brother was only a way of expressing his extreme joy.



GEN 33:11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

After determining that Jacob would not be satisfied until he received his gifts, Esau finally consented to take them. Just as Esau had said that he did not need the gifts because he already had enough, Jacob replied that he also had all that he needed. The gift was given and received. The pact of peace between them had replaced the hideous threat of Esau in the past that he would kill Jacob when he had the opportunity.

GEN 33:12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

This was Esau speaking. He seems to have invited Jacob to come to the area of Mount Seir where Esau had settled. He offered to go out in front and take the lead in bringing Jacob and his family to his territory.

GEN 33:13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

Jacob graciously refused to allow Esau to lead him to the land of Seir. The reason he gave was that he and his could not keep up. Esau's four hundred men would wish to move much faster than Jacob's children and his livestock could travel. They could be injured by too fast a pace.



GEN 33:14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

Was this a deliberate deception by Jacob? Some are convinced that it was. Others feel this is not warranted by the text. I will admit that Jacob appears to say he will meet Esau at Seir as soon as the pace of the children and the livestock will allow it. I do not believe the grammar demands that interpretation. It is true that Jacob did not go to Seir at that time. He proceeded to enter Canaan and pitch his camp on the east of the Jordan river for an extended time. Then he moved across the Jordan and settled at Schechem.

What we do not know is whether or not he visited Esau one or more times at Seir after this statement was made. It is hard to believe that after God had changed his name from Jacob (supplanter) to Israel (Prince with God) he would have reverted to his old character of deception. The general context of trust between the brothers would indicate a higher standard than this.

GEN 33:15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

Esau was still constrained to lend whatever aid he could to the welfare of Jacob and his troupe as they moved onward. He offered to lend him the support of some of his four hundred men.

Jacob declined the offer. He bid farewell to Esau by once more calling him lord. All seemed well in their

relationship. Nor do we see animosity arising between the Edomites and the Israelites until much later in the history of God's people.

GEN 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

They parted ways, with Esau moving back southward to the area of Mount Seir, and Jacob moving toward the west and the Jordan River.

GEN 33:17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

Jacob and his family stopped for some time at Succoth as he built housing for both his people and his livestock. Although we have but a single verse recording this in this chapter, it is probable that they spent a year or two at Succoth.

GEN 33:18 And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.

After spending this time at Succoth the company moved across the Jordan to the west side and into the land which God had promised to his people. This was not to be their permanent home. They would still spend the four hundred years of bondage that the Lord had prophesied. But, Israel was returned from Padanaram and was back in the land to which Abraham had come from Ur of the Chaldees.

GEN 33:19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of



the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

Abraham had purchased the cave of MacPhelah long before this. Now Jacob also became the owner of some property in Canaan. He must have dug a well there in Shechem. This would have been the one at which Jesus had his conversation with the woman of Samaria which is recorded in the fourth chapter of John.

GEN 33:20 And he erected there an altar, and called it EleloheIsrael.

One of the very first things Jacob did was to build an altar that he might worship the Lord his God. He dedicated the altar to the Lord by naming it EleloheIsrael which means "God is the God of Israel."

Chapter 34

GEN 34:1 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

This is one of the most infamous chapters of the entire Bible. It demonstrates the low condition of moral values in the pagan world. But, sadly, it also pictures the depths to which the minds of God's own people can reach on occasion. It is not a pleasant task to even read this chapter, to say nothing of making comments on it.

Jacob and his family had spent some time in this area near the village of Shechem. We do not know the precise number. We do know it was more than just a year or two. Jacob had purchased property and seems to have intended making this a permanent dwelling place. It was a place of degraded morals, as the succeeding events prove. But Jacob would have had difficulty in finding any place in Canaan where this was not true.

We do not know Dinah's motives in going out to see the daughters of the land. She was the only daughter of Jacob, which must have been a somewhat lonely position. She was in her early teen years. Young people seek the company of others their own age. Dinah may have only have been trying to find companionship. That would have been an excusable motive.

Most commentators, however, have felt that Josephus was correct when he said an idolatrous festival was taking place at the time. If that was the case, Dinah was taking a serious risk in mixing and mingling with those who used such festivals as an occasion for fulfilling lustful passions. Jacob should have forbidden such lack of caution. Dinah should have heeded any such restriction. One or the other failed in their responsibilities, perhaps both did.

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**GEN 34:2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.**

John Willis and Henry Morris both feel that the Hebrew in this verse indicate force was involved in Shechem's taking Dinah and lying with her. I am not a Hebrew scholar. On the basis of the English used here I cannot draw that conclusion. It seems to me quite possible that Dinah was impressed with the son of the chief of the village and was a willing participant.

It does seem obvious that Shechem was "on the prowl" at the time he discovered the young woman.

**GEN 34:3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.**

One does not ordinarily fall in love with a woman who has been forcefully raped. Shechem must have had a very enjoyable experience. I am led to believe Dinah helped to make it so. Certainly Shechem's actions after the union must have changed drastically if the defilement was against her will.

**GEN 34:4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.**

The young man and woman who were considering marriage at that time in that country did not make the arrangements without consulting their parents. Shechem wished to marry Dinah. Protocol dictated that he request his father to make contact with Dinah's father to make those arrangements. His manner of speech may leave

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something to be desired if he presented a brash demand to Hamor. We do not know the tone of his voice.

GEN 34:5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

In the meantime, Jacob had somehow heard that his daughter had been used sexually by Hamor. He did not immediately make a decision as to what action should be taken. He decided to wait until his sons returned from tending the livestock in the fields.

GEN 34:6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

Hamor honored his son Shechem's request, or demand, whichever it was. He went to Jacob to discuss the matter.

GEN 34:7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter: which thing ought not to be done.

It would be helpful to know just how old Dinah's brothers were. Genesis chapter thirty tells us Dinah was born after all of Leah's sons were born. The only brothers who were younger than she were Joseph and Benjamin. Thus she would have had a number of brothers who were perhaps fifteen years of age, or older. Each of these would have been old enough to recognize the seriousness of what had taken place.



Some commentators concern themselves with the fact that this folly was committed “in Israel.” This term is not applied to Jacob’s descendants until later. Still, we must recognize the strong possibility that Jacob had revealed his experience with the angel and had taught his sons about the name change and the place his seed were to take if they kept themselves as a separate people. They could have very well known that they were of “Israel.”

GEN 34:8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.

Hamor presented what he thought must be an appealing proposition. His son loved Dinah. He had not just sexually abused her. He wished to marry her.

GEN 34:9 And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

In addition, Hamor took the proposition much farther. Not only would it be desirable for Shechem and Dinah to marry. It would be of advantage to both Jacob’s family and his own people for there to be intermarriage between them.

GEN 34:10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

The family of Jacob would be free to move about in the land without friction. They could enter into business dealings with the Shechemites. Both groups could prosper if such an alliance was set up.



GEN 34:11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

GEN 34:12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

Shechem had remained in the background until this time. It was proper that his father take the initiative in asking for Dinah as his bride. Now he felt it was best for him to add his own comments to the conversation.

The young man was prepared to offer a very large dowry for his proposed wife. A dowry was expected at that time. The more wealth a man had access to, the greater dowry he might be expected to offer. Apparently the family of Hamor was well to do.

GEN 34:13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:

The entire proposal was absolutely and completely disgusting to Jacob's sons. They considered what had happened as an affront to their entire family.

Therefore, they made a deceitful counter proposal to Hamor and Shechem.

GEN 34:14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us:

They declared that it would be unthinkable to allow a marriage between an uncircumcised male and the daughter of those who were of the circumcision. God had



commanded that His people be circumcised, and that any who wished to unite with them must also submit to the procedure. This set them apart from others who were not dedicated to Jehovah. God would not approve such a union.

GEN 34:15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;

GEN 34:16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

If there was to be free intermarriage between Jacob's family and the Shechemites, every male Shechemite must be circumcised. If this was to take place, they would agree to the proposal.

They would then feel free to marry the daughters of the Shechemites, and the Shechemites would also be free to marry the women of Jacob's troupe. They would become one people, all dedicated to the service of Jehovah.

GEN 34:17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

If this arrangement was rejected, they would retrieve Dinah from their midst and they would leave.

Did Jacob's sons expect the proposal to be rejected. Were they setting up a plan by which they had means to punish the Shechemites for Dinah's defilement? I believe the deceit mentioned in verse thirteen was there from the beginning to the end.

GEN 34:18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son.

Hamor and Shechem both agreed to the proposal. A bit of momentary discomfort might lead to many advantages was they united with Jacob and his family, with their sizable wealth in livestock.

GEN 34:19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.

If Shechem actually raped Dinah, forcing himself upon her, this is a strange statement. He is said to have been the most honorable in his father's house. Surely the act which he had committed with Dinah was dishonorable. But it hardly seems that if he used violence against Dinah that the rest of his father's house were more despicable than he was.

GEN 34:20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

The two men returned to the people of their village and discussed the plan with the men. The gate of the city was the place where social concerns were discussed then. It was something like the county courthouse today. Job was known in the gates of the city.

GEN 34:21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.



They explained to the rest of the men that they were certainly not at war with Jacob's family. There was no reason why they could not all occupy the same area without conflict. They would have a larger selection of possible mates and so would Jacob's troupe.

GEN 34:22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.

There was only one condition. That was that all the men of Shechem were to undergo circumcision. It has been pointed out that this was not unknown among the pagan population. Yet, we are made to wonder that the condition was to be seriously taken by adult men with no more to gain than seems apparent.

GEN 34:23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

The attractiveness of the offer was that over a period of time they could assimilate all of the property of Jacob and his sons.

GEN 34:24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

Hamor and Shechem were able to persuade the entire community to follow their plan. Some politicians are masters at manipulation. On occasion it is accomplished by coercion. Other times the people are like a flock of



sheep who must only be shown which way they are to go, and who will then blindly go that way. After having lived for over seventy years, I am not surprised that Hamor and Shechem were able to bring their plan into action.

GEN 34:25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.

The tenderness from the circumcision procedure becomes greater after a couple of days than at the time of the operation. In spite of that, it seems that the men of Shechem would have been capable of banding together and resisting the attack of only two men. One commentator pointed out that even the women of the village could have come together and successfully stopped only two persons. The possible explanation is that Simeon and Levi had the help of some others who were not actually Jacob's sons.

This was a despicable action. It was made possible by deceiving the men of Shechem into thinking the motive was peaceable and then turning violent. God does not approve of lying.

GEN 34:26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

They killed both Shechem and his father Hamor by the use of their swords, which is even gruesome to contemplate.

Then they took Dinah from the house of Shechem. Again some of the commentators see this as proof that Dinah was taken captive after her relationship with

Shechem. That need not be the only explanation. She could have been in the house of Shechem because she chose to remain there and wished to become his wife.

GEN 34:27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.

After killing all of the men of the city, Jacob's sons plundered it. The justification they used was that Dinah had been defiled. It is highly doubtful that, even if Dinah was taken against her will, this warranted the murder of innocent men and the removal of their possessions.

GEN 34:28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field,

GEN 34:29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.

Nothing was left. Even the wives and children of the Shechemites were captured. Although it is not stated, the captives could have been used to satisfy the lust of their captors, or they could have been used or sold as slaves.

GEN 34:30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

Jacob had more foresight than his brash sons. He realized what they did not. The Shechemites were not the



only tribe living in the area. There were a large number of other groups who might well become concerned over their own safety. They could band together and eliminate his own people.

This would not have happened. God had plans for the descendants of Jacob. However, Jacob's statement should certainly have been considered before such rash action had been taken.

GEN 34:31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

The sons had a ready reply for their father. She had been treated as if she was a female ready to sell her body for monetary advantage. After having used Dinah sexually, Shechem had suggested that everything could be solved by offering a large dowry.

It is possible that Shechem had done just that. It is also possible that by her actions in going out to see the daughters of the land Dinah had invited such attentions as she received, and that she liked what happened and decided to go to Shechem's house and be his wife.

Later on, in the forty-eighth and forty-ninth chapters of Genesis, Jacob remembered this series of events and he said Simeon and Levi would be scattered and divided among Israel after his death because of the fierceness of their anger. They would not receive the blessing the others were to receive. It seems clear that it was the death and plunder of the Shechemites that motivated that statement.

One more note should be added. The Bible includes both righteous and wicked actions by it's chief characters. Jacob and his sons acted in a sinful manner in dealing with the Shechemites. Human authors would have been tempted to omit such deficiencies. God did not.



Chapter 35

This chapter is a combination of a series of events which are sometimes recorded out their natural time sequence. For example, Isaac's death is recorded, but did not take place until several years after the general thread of events in the book.

It is as if God desired that the reader be prepared for the life of Joseph, which dominates the remainder of the Genesis record.

GEN 35:1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

After the shameful reproach that Simeon and Levi had brought upon the household of Jacob by their slaughter of the Shechemites, God saw fit to send the family to Bethel where Jacob had seen Him before. God commanded Jacob to return there, to built an altar and to dwell there.

GEN 35:2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

Jacob's household had been exposed to idolatrous influences both in Padanaram and in Shechem. Although Jacob had tried to keep them pure, as we can see in his efforts at the time Rachel sat upon a false god to hide it from him, they had contaminated themselves with numerous tokens of idol worship. They had very likely

gained possession of some of these when they plundered the city of Shechem.

They were to put all such things away from them. They were to wash their bodies and change their clothing to remove any semblance of infidelity to Jehovah from their presence.

GEN 35:3 And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

Bethel was a very special place to Jacob. He had come closer to God there than anywhere he had been. Some suppose that he had not been back to Bethel since God appeared to him there. Just because the Bible does not record a visit does not mean such a visit did not take place. Bethel was not a long distance from Shechem where Jacob's family lived for several years before the disgrace came.

GEN 35:4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

The word "all" here is proof that this was not a matter of two or three false gods. There must have been a sizable number of them. In addition, they had accumulated earrings which had something to do with corrupted worship. We gain the impression that these earrings were worn by both men and women, and that they symbolized some type of reverence for heavenly bodies, etc. Those who have collected these objects tell us they were inscribed with mysterious engravings.



All of these items were buried under a tree near Shechem. If that was their source, it was logical to leave them there.

GEN 35:5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

If the terror of the Lord had not been upon the cities near which they passed, we can assume they would have been attacked by the tribes who had heard of that which took place in Shechem. God has His methods of protecting His own. They may be different in these latter days, but we may have confidence that He causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

GEN 35:6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him.

It is not strange that Bethel was called Luz. Jacob had previously given it the name Bethel. However the persons who lived in the area may well have known it as Luz even after Jacob named it.

GEN 35:7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

Now Jacob is said to have added an extra “El” to the name which he had given it before. El refers to the

“Mighty God.” Bethel had now become the house of the “Mighty, Mighty God.”

GEN 35:8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth.

Rebekah's death is not recorded in Genesis. That of her nurse, Deborah, is recorded. Is this an indication that the nurse was higher in estimation in the eyes of God than was Rebekah? We do not know. We do know that God's evaluation of men often differs drastically from that of men. Zaccheus was not held high in the eyes of men. God saw fit to honor his effort to see Jesus when he passed by.

GEN 35:9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.

God appeared only once to Abraham in giving him the promise. He appeared more than once to Jacob. This could be a sign that Jacob required more support than Abraham. It may only mean God wished to be absolutely certain Jacob did not forget the destiny which he had been assigned as “Prince of Israel.”

GEN 35:10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

GEN 35:11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;



Jehovah reminded Jacob that the name he had given to Bethel was accurate. He is the Almighty. Then he reversed the thought and referred to the name He had assigned to Jacob. That name was "Israel." Jacob was not to forget the God had special plans for him and his descendants. Not just one nation, but a number of nations would arise from him.

This may refer to the twelve tribes, or it may refer to later times in which Jews have played an extremely important role, sometimes ruling an entire nation.

GEN 35:12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

GEN 35:13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

Both the seed promise and the land promise were repeated for Jacob's benefit. To this very day the Jews feel that they have a divine right to the land of Canaan. Today the seed promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and the land promise is fulfilled in the Kingdom of Christ.

GEN 35:14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

GEN 35:15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.

After God had conversed with Jacob and had ascended from him, Jacob set up a stone pillar as a memorial of the meeting. He first poured a drink offering on the pillar. Then he poured oil on it. Both of these offerings spoke



of his willingness to sacrifice himself and his possessions to enhance the glory of God.

GEN 35:16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

Ephrath is the same as Bethlehem Ephrathah where Jesus was born. As they neared Ephrath, Rachel entered labor with her second child, Benjamin. It is not impossible that the rigors of the journey caused a premature delivery.

GEN 35:17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

During the course of the labor she was informed that the child would be safely born and it would be a son.

GEN 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Rachel was able to name the child and she called it Benoni which means “son of sorrows.” Jacob must have felt that name would be a constant reminder of his mother’s death during his birth. He replaced the name Benoni with the name Benjamin, which means “son of my right hand.” There is some discussion as to the meaning of the word Benjamin, but this meaning is accepted by most students.

GEN 35:19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.



We cannot overlook the fact that in the past Rachel had cried out to God, "Give me children, or I die." She had two children and died during the birth of the second.

GEN 35:20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

This day is of course the day when Genesis was written. There is a pillar in that location today which is called Rachel's pillar. It is very doubtful that it is the one Jacob set up.

GEN 35:21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.

God had told Jacob to go to Bethel and dwell there. It may be that by journeying beyond the tower of Edar Jacob ignored God's command. If so, we have no record of God's displeasure at his departure.

GEN 35:22 And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Jacob's oldest son, Reuben had caused him sorrow on more than one occasion in the past. Now he proceeded to embarrass his father beyond description. He had sexual intercourse with Bilhah, who was Jacob's concubine, and who had born him two sons, Dan and Naphtali.

There are suggestions that this sin came about through a combination of factors. Reuben would have had trouble in finding a wife. He would have been forced to go to one of his father's servants. They had been



instructed not to mix with the uncircumcised people of the land. It is also suggested that this was a source of revenge for lack of attention to Jacob's other wives after the death of Rachel.

Whatever the cause, Reuben lost the advantages he would have had as the eldest son. We are informed of that fact during the blessing of the twelve sons later on (Gen. 49).

GEN 35:23 The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

GEN 35:24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin:

GEN 35:25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali:

GEN 35:26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid: Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.

This list of Jacob's sons numbers twelve. They are given under the names of his two wives and two concubines. Other places give different numbers, as Joseph's place is taken by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

GEN 35:27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

Probably hearing that his aged father Isaac was at the point of death, Jacob went to visit him. This may have been one of a very few visits since the Bible is silent on this. Since Rebekah's nurse was with Jacob's family when she died, we suspect that Jacob had gone to his



father at the death of Rebekah and had taken Deborah to live with his family.

GEN 35:28 And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

The ages at death were still far greater than they are at present. Isaac died at one hundred eighty. Abraham died at one hundred seventy-five. Both Adam and Methuselah lived to be nearly one thousand years of age.

GEN 35:29 And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

To give up the ghost is to have the spirit leaven the body. "The body without the spirit is dead." When Jesus died upon the cross, we are told that his spirit departed from him.

One wonders what is meant by being "gathered unto his people." Was this only a way of saying he was buried and found his place with them beneath the surface of the ground? This does not seem to be the thrust of the verse. First, it mentioned his giving up the ghost, then it follows that with the statement that he was buried. The Bible speaks of a Hadean world from which the dead can be given new bodies in the resurrection. There are some mysteries that we will only completely understand when we have experienced them.

Jacob and Esau had healed their past conflicts and cooperated in the burial of their father Isaac. Death sometimes brings kinfolk who have been at odds, back together. Some of us today pray that our own death may bring a reconciliation of our own loved ones!



Chapter 36

GEN 36:1 Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom.

There are numerous difficulties in this chapter. Different names are given for the same person. Events are discussed which had not yet taken place in the time of Moses who is presumably the writer. The genealogy of Esau appears at first sight to be unrelated to the promise given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and followed throughout both the old and new testament records.

There are, however, some important facts brought forth that the interested Christian should not overlook. We will attempt to emphasize the latter and not spend an improper amount of time in analysis of the unresolved problems.

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. The major record of the Bible follows the genealogy of Jacob as the Prince of Israel. Now we come to the genealogy of Esau, which is not as important as that of Jacob, but which rounds out the influence of Jacob's line.

GEN 36:2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

This verse tells us one of the possible reasons for including this material. Jacob avoided intermarriage with either the Shechemites or the Egyptians. God had commanded that such intermarriage not take place. Esau and his descendants did intermarry with a number of foreign tribes. The result was very detrimental to the

welfare of Israel since the resulting Edomites were a thorn in Israel's side and refused to allow Israel to pass through when they returned from Egypt.

GEN 36:3 And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

The reader is referred to the differences found in Genesis 26:34 and Genesis 28:9. More than one name is often found in the Bible for a number of individuals as well as places. My wife's name was Underwood before she married. That changed at the time of our marriage. Such things could have taken place in the time of Esau also.

GEN 36:4 And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Bashemath bare Reuel;

GEN 36:5 And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

GEN 36:6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob.

Esau was a changed man from those early days in which he hated Jacob so intensely that he threatened to kill him over the birthright. He met Jacob in a friendly fashion when Jacob returned from Padanaram. He was present at the burial of Isaac, without any indication of malice. We now have one more proof that he was amiable.

His decision to move from Canaan to the region of Mount Seir and leave Jacob to settle in the promised land is reminiscent of Abraham's offer to Lot at the time their herds and flocks became to abundant for the land to support both.

GEN 36:7 For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle.

Both Jacob and Esau had accumulated more than they needed of material possessions. Jacob had earlier offered large gifts to Esau, and Esau had declined the offer, saying that he already had enough.

Riches are capable of bringing hostility into relationships. Esau recognized this and wished to avoid it.

GEN 36:8 Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

Mount Seir was located to the southeast of Canaan. Esau and Edom both mean "red." All seems well between the two brothers at this time. It is not so between the Israelites and the Edomites who descended from the two.

GEN 36:9 And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir:

GEN 36:10 These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.



GEN 36:11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

GEN 36:12 And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

GEN 36:13 And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.

GEN 36:14 And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

God knew His reasons for this list of the sons of Esau. I shall assume that His reasons were valid, even though I do not see strong reason for their inclusion.

GEN 36:15 These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz,

The word "duke" was probably a term showing outstanding importance. It could have had some military significance such as we use today for major, etc. It could have been a description of political prominence such as mayor.

GEN 36:16 Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah.

GEN 36:17 And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these are the dukes that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.

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**GEN 36:18** And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.

**Gen 36:19** These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their dukes.

Some of the sons listed above are grandsons. This is in line with many other references where grandsons and granddaughters were called sons and daughters.

**GEN 36:20** These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah,

Here we have list of the descendants of a Horite chief. This list is important in that Esau did not keep separate from the tribes in the area of Mount Seir. Jacob's pure line led to the arrival of the Messiah. Esau's impure line only presented resistance to God's plan.

**GEN 36:21** And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

**GEN 36:22** And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna.

**GEN 36:23** And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

**GEN 36:24** And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.

Of what significance is that Anah found some mules in the wilderness as he fed the asses of his father? I do not know.

Apparently many others have had similar problems. The word which is translated as “mules” is not found anywhere else in the Bible. Some translations render the word as “warm springs.” No one is certain. If “mules” is the correct translation we need to recall that a mule is the result of crossing the ass or donkey with the mare or female horse. Some think Anah was the first to develop mules. They see Anah as producing these animals rather than finding them already in existence. The mule is normally sterile.

**GEN 36:25 And the children of Anah were these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.**

**GEN 36:26 And these are the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.**

**GEN 36:27 The children of Ezer are these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan.**

**GEN 36:28 The children of Dishan are these; Uz, and Aran.**

**GEN 36:29 These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah,**

**GEN 36:30 Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.**

We can see from this entire chapter that Esau’s people did not hesitate to mix freely with those who worshipped false gods.

**GEN 36:31 And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.**

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By this time kings began to reign over the land of Edom. Although there were not yet any kings reigning over Israel. There are those who say this verse must have been written after the time of Saul and the beginning of kings over Israel. That is not necessarily true. The writer could have simply noted that Edom had kings and Israel had not gone that route at the time of the writing. He did not have to know Israel would appoint kings at a later time.

GEN 36:32 And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city was Dinhabah.

These kings of Edom did not produce dynasties in which sons followed their fathers on the throne. Each king seems to have arisen on his own, through political or military action.

GEN 36:33 And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

GEN 36:34 And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead.

GEN 36:35 And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith.

GEN 36:36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.

GEN 36:37 And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.

GEN 36:38 And Saul died, and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

GEN 36:39 And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was

Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

Israel later demanded a king. God informed them that He was not pleased with their demand. He then described to them just what would happen when the king was appointed. He allowed them to appoint one in opposition to his wisdom. The results were not as disastrous as that which took place in Edom, but did lead to many complications.

GEN 36:40 And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth,

GEN 36:41 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,

GEN 36:42 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar,

GEN 36:43 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he is Esau the father of the Edomites.

Thus the Edomites came into existence. God is aware of the condition and the potentialities of all men. Just because He chose to use the line of Jacob rather than that of Esau to bring the Messiah does not mean He did not care about Esau. He gave us his genealogy also. God also cares about those who are Gentiles today. It was the Jew through whom Christ came, but the gospel plan is to be preached to both the Jew and the Gentile.

Chapter 37

GEN 37:1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

Jacob was a stranger in that he owned almost no property in Canaan, as was true of Isaac, his father. The flocks and herds moved about over the countryside to the most suitable pasture land. The land promise had been made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through their seed, but none of the three saw it's fulfillment personally.

GEN 37:2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

Some have felt that the statement that these are the generations of Jacob refers back to that which had been previously recorded. The reason for hold that opinion is that the rest of the book of Genesis is devoted almost wholly to the life of Joseph.

However, the rest of these statements which are found in the previous chapters always came before the history of the individual. The life of Joseph is clearly a part of the generations of Jacob.

Joseph had reached the age where he could begin to take his place beside his older brothers. As he spent time with them, he took note of anything they did that he felt his father would not approve. He then delivered this evil report to Jacob. This was a very poor way to make friends and influence people.

GEN 37:3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

Jacob had not learned as much as he should have about parental partiality toward one child over others. His conflict with Esau arose from just such actions.

It is easy for us as outsiders to see the weakness in Jacob's loving Joseph more than the rest of his children. It is, however, much more difficult to see when it is our own children and we are the ones showing partiality. Some children have mechanical ability. Others have mental skills. Some are athletic. Others may draw toward art or music. It is very easy for a parent to give greater attention to the child who has interests and skills parallel to his or her own.

Jacob went so far as to provide a special garment for Joseph that vividly demonstrated his partiality. The word translated many colors is said by some to be "with long sleeves." Whatever the case, the coat set Joseph apart as special to his father. Between the tale bearing and the special coat, the enmity between Joseph's brothers and himself was growing steadily.

GEN 37:4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

We often greet one another with a pleasant "good morning" or "good afternoon." In Joseph's part of the world the greeting was often "peace." Joseph's brothers no longer found it easy to wish him peace. They were about ready to turn his life into turmoil rather than peace.

GEN 37:5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

The picture becomes darker and darker. Joseph had a dream which could only bring on more hatred. He could have kept the dream to himself. He did not!

GEN 37:6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

GEN 37:7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

Joseph had envisioned he and his brothers reaping in the fields. His own sheaf had stood upright while those of his brothers bowed low and paid homage to his sheaf.

Was this dream sent to Joseph by God? It did come to pass later in the land of Egypt. It is your present writer's opinion that God revealed the information to Joseph as part of his providential oversight of the family of Jacob.

GEN 37:8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

His brothers were most unhappy over the thrust of the dream. They had no difficulty in interpreting it. What did Joseph think the future held for him? Did he have any more right to prestige and honor than the rest of the sons of Jacob?



GEN 37:9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

It sounds as if this second dream came shortly after the first. The theme was the same. Except this time it included not only his brothers. It also included his mother and father.

GEN 37:10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Jacob did have enough common sense to chide Joseph for revealing his dream. It was not likely that the entire family would humble themselves before Joseph any more than any other of the children.

Rachel was dead at this time. How could Rachel bow down before him? Jacob probably only meant by his statement that any homage paid by any member of the family was not to be expected.

GEN 37:11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

The brothers were fuming. Their thoughts would be turned into action very shortly.

Jacob was not quite as sure as his statement to Joseph indicated. He had had similar experiences himself in the past. Perhaps there was something in what his young son was saying.



The fact that there were two dreams with the same general thought only emphasizes the idea.

GEN 37:12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

It seems strange that the brothers would have taken their flocks to the area of Shechem to find pasture. Jacob had left that area because of the danger from surrounding tribes who were irritated at the murder of the Shechemites. It was risky to go back.

GEN 37:13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

GEN 37:14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

It was also a considerable distance from Hebron to Shechem. Jacob requested that Joseph go and check on his brothers to see if all was well with them.

GEN 37:15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

It would have taken two or three days for Joseph to walk from Hebron to Shechem. When he arrived there he could not find his brothers. Seeing him wandering around, a man asked him what he was seeking.



GEN 37:16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

He replied that he was looking for his brothers. He would appreciate it if the man could give him any information as to their whereabouts.

GEN 37:17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

It just so happened that the man did know. He had heard them say they were headed for Dothan. This was about another day's journey. Were the brothers only trying to find suitable pasture for the flocks, or were they trying to put distance between themselves and the despised brother?

GEN 37:18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

GEN 37:19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

The most common sequence is for men to first think in their heart, then speak with their mouth, then put the thought into action. The brothers had long hated Joseph. They had discussed this hatred more than once. Now they were ready to put their hatred into action.

The word dreamer here carries a strong meaning. He seemed to be so proud of his dreams that his brothers referred to him as a master dreamer.

GEN 37:20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

The quickest solution seemed to be cold blooded murder. The plot was to kill him, then discard the body and persuade their father that he had been eaten by a lion or some other ferocious animal. That would take care of his obnoxious dreams.

GEN 37:21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

GEN 37:22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

Reuben had not been all that moral in the past. He did feel some doubt about murdering his own brother. He called upon the rest not to actually kill Joseph, but to throw him into a dry cistern. Reuben's purpose was to return to the pit later and release Joseph in order that he might return to Jacob.

GEN 37:23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

Joseph was outnumbered. His brothers quickly overcame him and removed the coat which was so precious to him, but hated by the brothers..



GEN 37:24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

They did not have to dig a pit. The area had cisterns for holding water. At this time there was not water in the cistern. Thus far they had followed the suggestion of Reuben.

GEN 37:25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

That situation was about to change. They had sat down apparently without a twinge of conscience and prepared to eat a meal while their brother pleaded with them to release him.

GEN 37:26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

Reuben had left the rest of them for some reason. Maybe he had the pretext of going to check on the livestock. He would then slip back and remove Joseph from the pit. While he was gone Reuben took over temporary leadership. They had seen a caravan of Ishmeelites with merchandise ready for sale in the land of Egypt. It would serve several purposes if they just sold Joseph to the traders. Joseph would be taken so far away they would never be troubled with him again. They would not have to kill him. They would also make a little profit from the sale.

GEN 37:27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

Judah's suggestion was approved. They really felt some hesitancy at murdering their own flesh and blood. This Ishmeelite band had come through at a very convenient time.

GEN 37:28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Was there a double sale here? The verse, as it reads seems to say a group called Midianites came by before the Ishmeelites arrived and they took Joseph out of the pit and then sold him to the Ishmeelites who then took Joseph to Egypt.

That is probably not the case. The Ishmeelites were likely from the land of Midian. Thus they were Ishmeelites by tribe, but Midianites by location. It was the brothers that drew Joseph out of the pit. The important point is that Joseph was sold for a few pieces of silver and was removed from Canaan and headed for slavery in Egypt.

Along with a number of others, our attention has been drawn to the similarity in the sale of Joseph for twenty pieces of silver and the sale of Christ for thirty pieces. Twenty pieces was the price of an immature slave. Thirty was the price of a mature slave.



GEN 37:29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

After he thought it was safe for him to return, Reuben came back to the pit to remove Joseph. To his surprise, his brother was gone!

It was Reuben who would have to report to Jacob. He did not relish the idea. The rending of his clothing was a typical action for a grief stricken Jew.

GEN 37:30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

Reuben explained that something would have to be done. What was he to do? How could he go to Jacob and explain?

GEN 37:31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

At that time goat's blood could not be distinguished from human blood. When Jacob saw the bloody garment he would of course assume the worst with respect to his beloved son.

GEN 37:32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

They did not lie to their father in so many words. Nevertheless, the intent to deceive was there. They might

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just as well have stated that Joseph had been eaten by a wild animal.

They showed him the coat and let him jump to the obvious conclusion. For all practical purposes, Joseph was dead in his father's mind.

**GEN 37:33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.**

**GEN 37:34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.**

Jacob was inconsolable. Like Reuben, he tore his clothing. He removed his normal comfortable clothing and replaced it with a fabric as rough as burlap. He continued to grieve.

**GEN 37:35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.**

As Jacob wept, his children attempted to console him. It did no good. He insisted that he would mourn to the day of his death.

Daughters are mentioned here in the plural. The only record we have of Jacob's daughters is Dinah. Still, it is highly doubtful that a man would have twelve sons and only one daughter.

We probably would not have heard of Dinah if it had not been for her little venture in seeing the daughters of the land and getting the family into trouble.



**GEN 37:36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.**

If the reader had doubts about whether the Ishmeelites and the Midianites were the same group of persons, this verse should settle the issue. In verse twenty-eight, if the Midianites and the Ishmeelites are two different groups, the Midianites would have sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites. Then the Ishmeelites would have sold him to Potiphar. Here we have the Midianites selling him to Potiphar. The Midianites and the Ishmeelites were identical.

The word "officer" in this verse is the same word translated as "eunuch" in a number of other places. Those who were close to the harem of the Pharaoh's were sometimes castrated to eliminate temptation. This may be the reason Potiphar's wife was so interested in Joseph. She may have felt the need for sexual satisfaction.

It is reported that some of the eunuch's did have not only one wife, but an actual harem. This would have been a matter of pride rather than need.



## *Chapter 38*

**GEN 38:1 And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.**

It seems that this chapter may somehow have gotten out of place. Some of the events which are described here occurred before those of previous chapters.

For some reason Judah separated himself from the rest of his brethren. He may have felt a larger degree of guilt over the sale of Joseph to the Ishmeelites. He may have felt the need to think over his responsibilities with respect to carrying on the lineage of Jacob's family and the promised blessing.

At any rate he left them and made friends with Hirah who was of the tribes outside Israel. This would lead to some long range consequences that he had no way of foreseeing.

**GEN 38:2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.**

One is very apt to find a spouse from the people with whom he or she has constant contact. Judah soon saw a young woman of the Canaanites who was pleasing to him. The text does not mention him receiving permission from her parents, nor approval from his own father. It does not even say he married her. However, in verse twelve she is called his wife at the time she died.

**GEN 38:3 And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er.**

After a time she conceived and Judah's first son was born. His father named him Er.

**GEN 38:4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.**

A second son was born and this time it is recorded that Judah's wife named the child rather than Judah himself. The name she gave the babe was Onan.

**GEN 38:5 And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.**

A third son arrived and again it was Judah's wife who named him. It was not the practice in that time for the mother to name a son. This may show that there was some friction between Judah and his Canaanite wife.

The name of this third son was Shelah.

**GEN 38:6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.**

Obviously the Bible passes over several years here without comment. Er had become old enough to marry. We note that Judah was more cautious with his son than he was himself. He took a wife for his son. He did not allow Jacob to choose his own wife. We can probably assume that Tamar was not an Israelite and came from pagan parents.

**GEN 38:7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.**

We do not know what the wickedness of Er was. It is generally assumed that it had to do with rebellion against his father's choice of a wife, and a refusal to produce children to carry on the line.

This is not the only person whom God slew. Ananias and Saphira met the same fate.

**GEN 38:8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.**

Judah was not through in his efforts to obtain an heir. He made use of a custom well known at the time. Even before the time of Moses if a man died before producing a son, his younger brother was expected to marry his widow and give him a son. The child was not considered the son of the younger man. He was the heir of the older man who had died. Under the law of Moses this was known as "Levirate marriage."

Remember dear reader, we are examining events which took place in the "starlight" age, before the "moonlight age of the law of Moses, and long centuries before the "sunlight" age of Jesus Christ. Morals among both pagans and Israel were not as clearly defined.

**GEN 38:9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.**

Onan was very unhappy over Judah's command that he marry Tamar and raise up an heir for his dead



brother. He did go so far as to enter into sexual relations with her, but then at the last moment he withdrew and spilled his seed upon the ground.

This procedure is now called “coitus interruptus.” It is not a fail-safe method of birth control, but it does sharply reduce the possibility of pregnancy. The word “seed” in the Bible can mean the male sperm. It can mean an immediate child. It can also refer to descendants of generations to come.

**GEN 38:10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.**

The thing which displeased the Lord was Onan’s refusal to produce an heir for the family of Jacob. It was not the spilling of his seed.

In earlier days it was thought that male masturbation was a serious threat to one’s health. Even as late as the time of Adam Clarke, this practice was considered as dangerous as prostitution, homosexuality and adultery. It was felt that it could have lethal effects, both physical and spiritual. The reader is referred to Clarke’s comments on this passage!

Medical opinion today is less harsh in it’s condemnation. This practice can be quite damaging if the person becomes addicted to it.

**GEN 38:11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father’s house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father’s house.**

Two of his sons were already dead. Judah was not interested in seeing the third join them. Also it seems



that Shelah was still young enough that Judah could use his tender age as an excuse for not requiring him to marry Tamar.

It had become necessary for Tamar to return to her father's house. She had little hope of producing a son through the line of Judah.

**GEN 38:12 And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.**

Judah may not have had a very satisfactory marriage. When his wife died there is no evidence that he felt long lasting grief. He was comforted. Being comforted did not necessarily mean all his sexual needs had been eliminated.

After a time sheepshearing season came. It was a time when men left home to attend to the shearing. Not everything that went on had to do with the shearing of sheep. Judah joined company with his Canaanite friend Hiram and set out from home.

**GEN 38:13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.**

Tamar also knew of the kind of things which took place when men were away from home at the time of sheepshearing. She took note of Judah's actions and developed a plan to obtain her desired son through Judah. He would have been older than she, but that was not a prohibitive factor.

**GEN 38:14 And she put her widow's garments**

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off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

As a widow, Tamar wore the garments indicating widowhood. She took off her widow's garments and dressed up as a temple prostitute. She was dressed in eye catching clothing and wore a vail over her head. Judah would not recognize who she was.

Judah had promised Shelah to her, but had not kept his promise, even though Shelah had reached marriageable age. She was ready to do things her own way.

GEN 38:15 When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face.

As she expected, Judah saw her and from all indications she was a temple prostitute. The use of temple prostitutes was not considered a major sin by the majority of the people. These women dedicated themselves to the service of their female gods and the revenues were offered to the treasury of the goddess. Judah knew he was off limits, but his wife was dead and he would have felt sexually deprived.

GEN 38:16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?



A deal was set up. The woman would offer her body to Judah. She expected something of value in return. She asked what he had to offer. Judah had no idea of her identity. We may wonder why he did not recognize her voice. She would have taken care to muffle her voice to prevent such a possibility.

GEN 38:17 And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?

Judah offered to send her a young goat from his flock. She agreed but made it plain that she did not trust his promise without some type of guarantee that it would be kept.

GEN 38:18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

Judah wished to know what pledge she desired. Her response was that she wanted certain personal items which he had with him. She wanted his signet which would have been used to mark agreements in some similar way as we might presently stamp our name on a contract. She wanted some bracelets which would have likely had identifying marks on them. And she wanted the staff he used in moving over the countryside. This also might have had some head on it with identification.

She had him dead to rights if he failed to send the kid which he had promised. But, she was interested



in far more than a young goat. She wished to bear his child and place her name in the genealogical records. She almost certainly knew of the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

GEN 38:19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

After the episode was concluded, Tamar returned to her father's house and put back on the widow's garments. No one was the wiser, except she.

GEN 38:20 And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

Judah was man enough to make an attempt to pay his debt. He sent the goat by his friend Hiram. He would also have had some concern over the recovery of the items he had given Tamar as a pledge.

Why did he not take the kid himself rather than sending it by Hiram? If I am correct, he was suffering from a guilty conscience. Even if it was acceptable for the people of the land to consort with the temple prostitutes, it was not acceptable for one of the people of God. He would have liked to forget the whole experience.

GEN 38:21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place.

Hiaram could not find the woman. He inquired as to where he might find her. She had been in plain sight



of everyone before. Now she had disappeared. They answered that they had not seen a harlot. Perhaps he was mistaken.

GEN 38:22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place.

GEN 38:23 And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

When Hiram returned to Judah and reported that he could not find the woman, Judah was ready to forget the whole thing. He had sent the young goat as he had promised. Any further inquiries would only bring shame for his behavior. It would be best to just ignore it all.

GEN 38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

After some three months it was becoming impossible for Tamar to hide her pregnancy. Word got back to Judah that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, had acted the harlot and was with child.

If Judah had acted as responsibly as he expected Tamar to act, he would have saved himself much embarrassment. Immediately, upon receiving word of her condition, he called for her to be brought out and burnt. Stoning was the penalty for such an action. Judah was



so aggravated that he went farther than the customs called for.

GEN 38:25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, **By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.**

Judah did not know that Tamar had insurance against her death. When they brought her out, she produced the items he had given her as a pledge and declared that the man who owned those items was the father of her child. There was no way for Judah to deny his involvement. How would he react?

GEN 38:26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, **She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.**

At least Judah was responsible enough to admit that he had made a serious error in not keeping his promise to give Tamar his son Shelah as a husband. He did not take Tamar as his own wife. This would apparently been considered as adultery on his part.

GEN 38:27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.

The time of delivery arrived and it was discovered that she had twins. There was a need to know which of the twins was the first born and would thus become more important in the lineage than the other.

GEN 38:28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.

In order to insure that the firstborn was identified, the midwife tied a scarlet thread on the wrist of the one whose hand emerged first.

GEN 38:29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.

A complication arose. The one whose hand had first emerged pulled his hand back and the other of the twins was born ahead of the one with the scarlet thread. The one who was born first was named Pharez because he took the place of his brother.

GEN 38:30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.

The brother with the scarlet thread on his wrist was born second and was given the name Zarah. Thus we find Pharez listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ as given in the first chapter of the book of Matthew.

It is an odd fact that there were three women listed in the genealogy of Christ, and all three were involved in questionable activities. The three are Tamar, Ruth and Rahab. Tamar had sexual relations with her father in law. Ruth slept with Boaz before being married to him. Rahab was called "the harlot."



We can see from this chapter just how badly Jehovah needed to separate his chosen family from the morality of the tribes in the land of Canaan. If they had remained there they would have been absorbed by intermarriage and would have lacked the discipline they received in Egypt. By transplanting them to Egypt, God placed them among a people who did not intermarry with them because they were despised as shepherds.

Chapter 39

GEN 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

After a brief one chapter departure from the story of Joseph, we now return to him as we pick the matter back up in the household of Potiphar. We are reminded that Joseph was taken to Egypt and found himself as a servant in that house.

GEN 39:2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

We will see a number of repetitions of this statement that the Lord was with Joseph. God can cause any man or woman to prosper. This was seen over and over in the case of this fine young man.

GEN 39:3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

Potiphar would not have been a believer in Jehovah. Even so, he recognized that Joseph had divine assistance in whatever he was assigned to do.

Those who employ dedicated Christian workers are wise. They will find that the work will be done to the best of the worker's ability and will be done when it is expected to be.



GEN 39:4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

Very soon Potiphar found that he could leave his affairs in the hands of Joseph and all would be done in fine fashion. This was probably unwise on the part of Potiphar. A little closer checking might have prevented the disaster which followed.

GEN 39:5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

Even those things over which Joseph did not have oversight were prospering for Potiphar.

GEN 39:6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

Why did Potiphar exclude the preparation of his meals from the supervision of Joseph? Men of his stature were sometimes subject to poisoning by ambitious underlings. Also Potiphar might have been concerned over whether the religious rites which he accepted were being observed by a servant who had different beliefs than his own.

Joseph was a handsome man. He was so handsome, in fact, that literature in that part of the world has emphasized it repeatedly. He was reported in extra



Biblical records as being so handsome that Potiphar's wife lost all self control when she was around him. This must be taken with a grain of salt.

GEN 39:7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

Without much doubt she had made it quite apparent that she would welcome any advances on his part if he was to initiate the same. Ultimately she came right out and invited him to bed.

We must remember that Joseph was a young man whose passions would have been in full bloom at the time. If he was not tempted to cooperate with her we would be greatly surprised.

It is supposed that since Potiphar was probably an eunuch, his wife would have felt at least partially justified in her attempted seduction. Also Joseph might well have felt that by accepting her invitation he was doing her a service.

GEN 39:8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

Joseph resisted every temptation. He explained that he had two strong reasons for not accepting her advances.

GEN 39:9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?



First, he would be highly ungrateful to a master who had treated him much more kindly than one might expect a master to treat a slave. Only his wife had been kept from Joseph. It would be abominable for Joseph to betray such confidence.

Even more important, Joseph would be sinning against God. Though his master might not become aware of it, God certainly would. Joseph dared not defy the will of God. To go a step farther, Joseph did not wish to disobey, even if he had not been fearful.

Let us hope and pray that there are many men of God who would act as responsibly as Joseph did. Surely there are!

GEN 39:10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

Satan does not give up easily. If a man is strong one day, he may be weaker the next. If this woman gave Joseph an invitation day after day, surely he would falter sooner or later.

But he did not! He not only refused to do what she asked. He made it a point to avoid her presence as much as possible.

GEN 39:11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

There were occasions when Joseph had to be in the house to do those tasks Potiphar expected him to perform. Here was the woman's perfect opportunity. With none of the men other than Joseph in the house, she felt confident that her effort would be successful.



GEN 39:12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

The chances are very high that she had already disrobed herself. She repeated her invitation to sin with her. She even went so far as to pull at his robe. When he broke loose from her, his garment was left behind and in her possession.

GEN 39:13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

GEN 39:14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

A woman who would stoop to the moral level this woman had reached can be expected to do anything at any time. She screamed out loud so the men of the house would hear. When they came in she accused Joseph of having attempted to take advantage of her. She spoke in racial slurs when she called him a Hebrew. She was an Egyptian. He was of the despised Hebrew shepherders.

We can imagine that it did not take a great deal of persuading to set the men of the house against Joseph. He had been raised to supervisory level in a very rapid fashion. Jealousy would have reared its ugly head.

GEN 39:15 And it came to pass, when he heard



that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

She lied to the servants about how she had come into possession of Joseph's garment. When she had screamed he became afraid and ran out of the house.

Joseph surely realized the precarious position in which he had been placed. It is a fairly certain guess that he expected severe punishment, even though innocent. However, he also knew he had been true to God and God would be with him.

GEN 39:16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

Potiphar's wife had been spurned. She was determined to make Joseph suffer for rejecting her. She had all the evidence she needed. The garment was carefully laid away in wait for her husband's return.

GEN 39:17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

GEN 39:18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

When Potiphar arrived she used the despicable word "Hebrew" again. What she was saying was that Joseph had done just what Potiphar might have expected a "Hebrew" to do. To "mock" her would have been to use her and then laugh about it.

GEN 39:19 And it came to pass, when his master



heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

Potiphar reacted pretty much as one might expect a man to act when presented with such information as he had heard. He was furious.

GEN 39:20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

Why did Potiphar not have Joseph executed? That would have been the usual procedure in a case such as this and with a man who had the power that Potiphar possessed.

It is commonly believed that Potiphar knew his wife was not telling the whole truth. It is not impossible that he had known of similar impropriety of her part before this.

It was necessary for him to throw Joseph into the prison in order to ward off any effort on the part of some of the men of his house to actually fall to the temptation which Joseph had successfully overcome.

GEN 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

God works in wondrous ways which humans do not fully understand. In this case He was able to cause the keeper of the prison to look on Joseph just as Potiphar had done earlier.



GEN 39:22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

Soon Joseph had been raised from his chains to supervision of the other prisoners. He was put in complete charge of the activities in the prison.

GEN 39:23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

If a man will be faithful to God, he will find that God will direct his paths. It may not appear that all is prospering as it did in the case of Joseph. Yet, when all is surveyed from the judgment day, everything will have worked together for good to that kind of man. Dear reader, do not be afraid to lean upon the everlasting arms of Jehovah. They were strong enough to support Joseph. They will also support you.



Chapter 40

GEN 40:1 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

Joseph was in the prison for a number of years. He was a seventeen year old youth when he was sold into Egypt and quickly became a servant in the household of Potiphar (Gen. 37:2). He was thirty years old when he became the overseer of Pharaoh's granaries (Gen. 41:46). Part of this time was spent in Potiphar's house. The rest was in the prison.

Though Joseph rose to a position of supervision over the other prisoners, he still knew the meaning of confinement, and the bite of chains upon his ankles (See Psa. 105:17-18). He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters: He was laid in iron.

By the time of this verse, Joseph had been placed in a supervisory position over the other prisoners. He was still no doubt confined in the prison house, but he did have sizable responsibilities with respect to his fellow prisoners.

The use of the singular here in speaking of the butler and the baker does not warrant the conclusion that only one of each existed. Later, they will be called the chief of the butler's and bakers.

We are not told what their offense was. It is reasonable to believe that one was responsible for insuring both the quality and the safety of that which the king drank, and the other had the same duties concerning the food which he ate. It is quite possible that a plot to poison the king was discovered and the two of them were the prime suspects.

GEN 40:2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

Seeing that these two had neglected their duties, the king was angry and determined that protective action must be taken right away.

GEN 40:3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

The captain of the guard was Potiphar. Joseph was in the prison supervised by the man whose wife he had supposedly attacked. The fact that he was now treated as gently as he was says that Potiphar did not really believe his wife's accusations against Joseph.

GEN 40:4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

Joseph was the type of person who cared about others. He did not just see that they were securely confined. He observed them with concern

GEN 40:5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

Dreams played an important part in the history of the Old Testament. This was particularly true in the case of Joseph. These dreams were not of the type which most



of us dream today. Our dreams normally come about because of past experiences or future hopes. The dreams such as those mentioned here were sent as messages from God Himself.

Both the butler and the baker realized there was some significance in their dream, but they could not determine what that significance was.

GEN 40:6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.

One can often tell by looking at the expression on another's face that something is seriously troubling the individual. When Joseph came into their presence, he looked at them and knew they were brooding over something.

GEN 40:7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?

Rather than just going on his way unconcerned, Joseph asked them why they were gloomy. We can see Joseph's high character constantly in the Biblical record. He is not so elevated that we should try to find a type of Jesus Christ in every detail of his life. But, he certainly deserves high honor.

GEN 40:8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.

If they had been free they would have had access to

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the Egyptian soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. Since they were not free they could only wonder about the meaning of the dreams.

Joseph cleared the air by telling them the very best interpreter of dreams is God. If they would let him know the nature of the dreams, God would reveal their meaning.

**GEN 40:9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me;**

The chief butler spoke first. Since later on he was determined to be innocent of the charges placed against him, he would have felt confident that the meaning of his dream would be optimistic.

**GEN 40:10 And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:**

**GEN 40:11 And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.**

He had seen a vine with three branches. It had blossomed and produced ripe grapes. He had plucked the grapes and squeezed the juice from them into the drinking cup of Pharaoh. He had then offered Pharaoh the cup.

Some try to make the point that alcoholic wine was commonly used by acceptable characters in both the Old



and New Testaments. This verse is definite proof that, at least in a number of cases, wine was fresh grape juice, or grape juice diluted with water.

**GEN 40:12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:**

**GEN 40:13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.**

Joseph had wonderful news for the chief butler. He would be released within three days and would be restored to his previous position as chief of the butlers. He would then serve Pharaoh as he had done before.

**GEN 40:14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:**

**GEN 40:15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.**

Joseph added a very important comment. He also was innocent of the charges against him. He implored the chief butler to speak a word on his behalf when the butler had the opportunity.

**GEN 40:16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head:**



Later events indicate that the chief baker was guilty as charged. At least he was punished as if he was. Did he wait to ask for the interpretation of his dream because he had a guilty conscience and was more fearful of the meaning of his dream than was the chief butler? That is distinctly possible.

**GEN 40:17 And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.**

The baker had dreamed that he had three baskets of food, carrying them on his head. There were various kinds of baked goods in the top basket and the birds came along and ate from the baked goods so that they were unsuitable to present to Pharaoh.

**GEN 40:18 And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days:**

**GEN 40:19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.**

The news Joseph had for the baker was as terrible as the news for the butler had been pleasant. Within the same three day period the baker would be beheaded and hanged upon a tree, after which the birds would feed on his flesh.

Was the baker to be killed by beheading, by hanging or by both? It sounds as if he may have been beheaded and then had the rest of his body hung in a tree where the birds could feed on it.



**GEN 40:20** And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

**GEN 40:21** And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

**GEN 40:22** But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

All took place precisely as Joseph had predicted. God knew the future and revealed that future to the two men through the mouth of Joseph.

**GEN 40:23** Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

We would expect that the chief butler would have had such vivid memories of Joseph and his predictions that he could never have forgotten. Yet he did! Joseph spent about two years before the chief butler remembered him. And even then it was only because it could be of profit to himself to mention the man who had befriended him.

We consider the chief butler an ungrateful and careless man. Yet we often follow the same path that he followed. God has placed the hope of heaven before us. We go about our way as if no such hope had ever been offered. Not only do we ignore the hope personally; we forget those who are in the bondage of Satan's prison.



## *Chapter 41*

**GEN 41:1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.**

Those two full years that have passed so quickly for us as readers must have passed much more slowly for Joseph as he waited for the chief butler to remember him to Pharaoh. We can suppose that he must have become quite impatient and though he trusted in God to see that all ended well, he must have wondered when and how that help would come.

It looks as if all was going smoothly for Egypt and for Pharaoh during this time. But there was a change ahead. A preview of that change came through a dream. Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing at the edge of the Nile River which was absolutely essential to the prosperity of his nation.

**GEN 41:2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatteshed; and they fed in a meadow.**

Out of the river came seven fat and healthy animal. Our King James versions labels these as “kine.” Most of us understand kine to be cows. There are those who believe these animals were hippopotami. These animals can live under water and then emerge from the water and feed upon vegetation nearby, which is just what these seven kine did.

**GEN 41:3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and**



**leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river.**

Following the emergence of the seven healthy kine there emerged seven thin and sickly ones. These emaciated animals joined the others at the edge of the river.

**GEN 41:4 And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.**

Then the lean kine ate up the fat ones. The word translated eat is a very vivid word which could have been rendered as “gobbled up their flesh.”

Pharaoh's dream must have caused him to be startled. We have all awakened to tremendous relief when we found what was happening to us to be only a dream.

**GEN 41:5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.**

The man lapsed back into sleep and began dreaming a second time. This second dream was amazingly parallel with the first one. This time the seven had to do with ears of corn or maize. One stalk held seven ears, all of which were well filled out and pleasant to behold.

**GEN 41:6 And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.**

Then another stalk appeared with seven piteous ears that had been nearly destroyed by one of the hot and dry east winds which sometimes strike Egypt.





**GEN 41:7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.**

Just as the lean kine had eaten the fat ones, these seven piteous ears consumed the good ones.

Pharaoh woke up! The first dream would have caused him some concern over whether it had either good or evil significance for him or the nation over which he ruled. Now this second dream, which was obviously related to the first, commanded his attention. He must find out what the dreams meant.

**GEN 41:8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.**

Ancient Egypt is famous for just such fortune tellers and magicians as Pharaoh called together. Moses had opposition from the same types centuries later. The magicians were completely helpless. They might have speculated that the lean cattle and the thin ears were related to bad news. They could hardly have guessed what the number seven implied.

**GEN 41:9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:**

The chief butler had a flash of insight. Back there in the prison there had been a man who interpreted both his dream and that of the chief baker. He had been right in



every detail. He was sorry that he had not remembered more quickly.

The reason he had not remembered Joseph to Pharoah as he had promised was that it was of no profit to him. Now there was an advantage in jogging his memory.

**GEN 41:10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker:**

**GEN 41:11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.**

**GEN 41:12 And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.**

**GEN 41:13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.**

The chief butler made a very impelling case for calling Joseph to see what he would have to say about the two dreams of Pharoah.

By the way, the dreams in Joseph's life came in pairs. There were two dreams related to his brothers and his parents. There were two dreams related to the butler and the baker. Now there were two dreams of Pharoah.

**GEN 41:14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.**

You may have been in the dungeon prison for several years waiting and wondering. But when Pharoah calls



for you the picture changes right then.

What a bedraggled appearance Joseph must have had when he was called. It was necessary to clean up before stand in front of the ruler of Egypt. His shaving was probably more a matter of cutting off the unkempt portion of his beard and hair. He would not have had the type of garments needed for meeting Pharaoh. They were no doubt quickly made available to him.

**GEN 41:15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.**

Pharaoh came to the point quickly. He needed an interpretation of his pair of dreams. He had heard that Joseph had the ability to make interpretations. He desired that Joseph do so.

**GEN 41:16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.**

What an humble answer Joseph provided, and what an opportunity to glorify Jehovah who had given him the power to fulfill Pharaoh's wish. The dreams were not to disturb the ruler. They had a peaceful meaning.

**GEN 41:17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:**

**GEN 41:18 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow:**

**GEN 41:19 And, behold, seven other kine came**



**up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness:**

**GEN 41:20 And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine:**

**GEN 41:21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.**

**GEN 41:22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good:**

**GEN 41:23 And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them:**

**GEN 41:24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me.**

There is no need for repeating ourselves. The dreams are merely presented to Joseph for his interpretation.

**GEN 41:25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.**

Joseph first assured Pharaoh that the two dreams actually carried the same basic information. Pharaoh had been fortunate in that God had allowed him to find out what was in the future of his nation.

**GEN 41:26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one.**

**GEN 41:27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and**

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the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

GEN 41:28 This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

GEN 41:29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

GEN 41:30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

How did Joseph know the three in the dreams of the butler and the baker dealt with days, but the seven here dealt with years? God revealed it to him. The magicians did not have the source of information.

GEN 41:31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.

There would be seven years of great prosperity and bounteous crops. These seven would be followed by seven years of famine that would result in eating up the wealth of the first seven years.

GEN 41:32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

God had underlined the importance and surety of what was to happen by repeating the dream in a slightly different form.



GEN 41:33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

Joseph had some advice for Pharaoh. There was a need to find some man in the land who had exceptional wisdom and judgment. This man should be placed in a very high position with great authority to supervise the preparation for the coming famine.

There is no hint from Joseph that he would like to assume this position of authority himself.

GEN 41:34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

It would be necessary to appoint helpers for this one supervisor in order that twenty percent of the crops be laid up in store over the seven prosperous years to be ready for the seven lean ones.

This would not be a grievous burden on the people because the crops during those plenteous years would be far more bountiful than normal. There would be an abundance from which to fill the granaries.

GEN 41:35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

GEN 41:36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

GEN 41:37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

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Joseph's words rang true in the ears of Pharaoh. He felt that the interpretation was valid and that the advice was on target. His servants agreed with his evaluation. Perhaps each of them had some idea that he might be the one chosen.

**GEN 41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?**

The servants must have been shocked when Pharaoh decided Joseph was to be the man. Many of them had served the king for some time. Here was a man who had appeared out of nowhere to leapfrog over them and be appointed to high position.

It is wise to note that Pharaoh recognized Joseph as a man in whom the Spirit of God dwelt. He did not say the spirit of the "gods." Joseph had informed him that as a man Joseph could not interpret, but that God would give Pharaoh the interpretation. Pharaoh had learned a little about the one True God.

**GEN 41:39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:**

The Ruler then turned to Joseph and confirmed his previous statement. God was with Joseph and there was no equal in the land of Egypt.

**GEN 41:40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.**



Joseph was to be second in command to Pharaoh himself. When he gave a command every person was expected to honor and obey him.

As it must have been astonishing to the servants when Joseph was announced as the new commander, it must have been even more so to Joseph. He had spent years in the gloom of the prison dungeon. Now, in an amazingly short period of time, he had been elevated to an unbelievably majestic level of honor and power. In addition, he was but thirty years of age!

**GEN 41:41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.**

**GEN 41:42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;**

**GEN 41:43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.**

The signet ring would have been used to stamp official decrees. The fine clothing and the gold chain gave visible evidence of his authoritative position. Riding in the second chariot, right behind that of Pharaoh was like a presidential parade in modern countries where the Vice President rides in a limousine just behind the President. Someone preceded his chariot calling out to the bystanders that they were to kneel before Joseph.

**GEN 41:44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.**





Obviously, this is an exaggeration. Still, it demonstrates Pharaoh's absolute confidence in God's servant. This had happened in Potiphar's house. It had happened in the prison. Now it had happened at the highest level of Egyptian government.

**GEN 41:45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.**

Joseph was not an Egyptian. Pharaoh could have thought it would help for him to be known by an Egyptian name. He gave Joseph Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest for a wife. Does this mean Joseph asked for her hand? Or, does it mean Pharaoh did the choosing and Joseph was expected to accept his choice?

The reader will find conflicting comments on the success of this marriage. One commentator suggests that there is no record of Joseph ever marrying another wife and this would indicate a successful bond. Another points out that Asenath's father was a priest of the sun god and that Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh later led Israel toward idolatry. Asenath is suspect as to her influence over the sons.

One of Joseph's first tasks was to survey the entire situation in preparation for storing grain during the seven plenteous years just ahead.

**GEN 41:46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.**

**GEN 41:47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.**



As God had revealed to Joseph, the land produced amazingly well for the first seven years. It is fortunate for the nation that Joseph was in charge. If this had not been true, it is almost certain that the bounty would have been wasted and the later seven years would have led to starvation.

**GEN 41:48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.**

The extra food was stored near the cities in whose surroundings the grain had been grown. This served two purposes. It could be more easily distributed when it was needed. Also, the people could see that the government was not attempting to trick them. The food was within their own eyesight.

**GEN 41:49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.**

Without number is but a way of saying it was far beyond any expectation. The individual grains would surely have been innumerable.

**GEN 41:50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.**

This is quite a reduction from the number of wives and the number of sons his father Jacob had.



**GEN 41:51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.**

The name of the first son, Manasseh, meant “forgetting.” His son helped to forget the grief of being sold into Egypt and of being confined in prison.

**GEN 41:52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.**

The name of the second son was “Ephraim.” This name is said to mean “doubling.” God had caused him to thrive and enjoy a family.

**GEN 41:53 And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.**

**GEN 41:54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.**

There was a reason for God to allow the famine in Egypt and the surrounding nations. He was preparing for the move of Jacob and his family from Canaan into Egypt where they would have less tendency to integrate with idolatrous pagans because of the Egyptians inhospitable attitude toward shepherd people.

**GEN 41:55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.**



The supervision of Joseph proved wise and successful. When the lean years came the food was laid up and ready. Now Joseph had the responsibility to see that it was just as wisely distributed.

**GEN 41:56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth; and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.**

As far as the people of Egypt knew, the famine had engulfed everyone. The granaries were opened and the food was made available. Joseph should have been hailed as a hero.

**GEN 41:57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.**

We can see God's hand in it all. Other countries were finding it necessary to buy their own food from the supplies Egypt had built up.

If one does a little arithmetic it is easy to see that the people could not live for the last seven years as they did for the first seven. If we take twenty percent of the production for those first seven years, we have one hundred forty percent of one year's production. By the time we subtract the twenty percent from each year we have eighty percent to live on for those first seven years. This means they could not have lived for more than two years at the same consumption level that had been the case for those first seven years. When we figure in the fact that other nations were buying food, we can see there had to be a drastic reduction in living standards.



People can get along on much less than they usually have. During the second seven lean years, the Egyptians were very likely living on less than one third of the consumption during the seven prosperous years.

## *Chapter 42*

**GEN 42:1** Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

Canaan was suffering from the famine just as a number of other countries in the area were doing. Jacob had heard that others were traveling to Egypt to buy grain. He approached his sons with what he considered to be the only solution to their food shortage. As yet, none of them had entertained the idea of going to Egypt, the land into which they had sold their brother. It was more comfortable not to think about what had happened to him.

**GEN 42:2** And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

The patriarch was now old and gray headed. That did not prevent him from taking the lead in his family. He gave his sons firm instructions and expected them to do as he said. He had no idea that Joseph had been sold into Egypt. He had been led to believe his son was dead.

**GEN 42:3** And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

**GEN 42:4** But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

There were only ten of the twelve that went. Joseph  
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was already in Egypt and Benjamin was kept at home with his father. He was, at this time, past twenty years old, but his father still did not wish to take the risk that his only remaining son by Rachel might be lost to him.

GEN 42:5 And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

GEN 42:6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

Joseph had been placed in complete control of the dispensing of the precious grain supplies that had been accumulated through the seven prosperous years. Anyone who purchased these supplies found it necessary to have his approval, either directly or indirectly. This would have been especially true for those from other nations.

When his brethren bowed down before him, they were fulfilling the dream which he had dreamed so many years before.

GEN 42:7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

We cannot help but wonder if Joseph anticipated the coming of his brothers. He did not know what their condition was after the years he had been separated from them. He did know Canaan was suffering severe



food shortage. He could have been watching carefully to see if his brothers might appear among the applicants for food.

GEN 42:8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

It is not surprising that this was true. His brothers had changed, but certainly not to the extent that he had. He was but a lad when they sold him. He was now over thirty years of age. He had exchanged his coat of many colors for the garments of the second highest official in the land of Egypt. He was speaking the Egyptian language and they were speaking Hebrew.

GEN 42:9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

Joseph recalled the events of the past vividly. He decided to test them to see how they would react to a little adversity themselves. He accused them of having come to see what type of military capabilities Egypt had. They must be spies.

GEN 42:10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

They denied emphatically that they were there as spies. They were desperate for food. That was the only reason they had come.

GEN 42:11 We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.



Their logic in trying to prove their innocence of the spy charge was that they were all sons of the same man. They were not individuals who had come from that many different tribes who had decided to see if they could combine forces and successfully attack Egypt.

It is interesting that they did not say they all had the same mother and father. They had more than one mother.

GEN 42:12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

GEN 42:13 And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

GEN 42:14 And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:

Joseph pretended not to believe a word they were saying. As spies they could have been executed. The situation was very serious. What was this Egyptian officer going to do with them?

GEN 42:15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

He came up with a way that they might prove their point. They must remain in Egypt until Benjamin had come into Egypt.

GEN 42:16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.



GEN 42:17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

He would send one of the men back to Canaan to bring Benjamin. The rest would be held in prison until that one returned with the younger brother. He gave them three days in the prison to think over the matter. We can well imagine the kind of thoughts that went through their heads during those three days.

GEN 42:18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

He came back on the third day with a modified plan. He informed them that the change was because he feared God. The reader will note that he used the singular. He feared God, not gods. He had maintained his confidence in the True God through all of those years in a land of idolatry.

GEN 42:19 If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:

GEN 42:20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

The truth of their story would be checked out by the selection of one of them to remain in Egypt while the others returned to Canaan and brought Benjamin back. They need not die if they were telling the truth. They began to talk over the situation.

GEN 42:21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we

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**saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.**

Their consciences were now hurting them severely. The guilt they had carried with them through all those years had come to the surface. They had heard his pleadings at the time they sold him into Egypt. Rather than heeding his cries, they had sat down to a meal with no concern for him at all. There could be little doubt that what was taking place was because of their past callousness.

**GEN 42:22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.**

Reuben did not lessen their load when he reminded them that he had advised them not to kill Joseph. Now it was clear that they were sowing as they had reaped. God had said that if a man shed another's blood, he was to pay with his own blood (Gen. 9:6).

**GEN 42:23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.**

**GEN 42:24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.**

Although they did not know it, Joseph could understand every word they were saying. It pierced his



heart to the extent that he was forced to leave their company for a short while as he wept with sorrow. Then when he regained control of his emotions, he returned to them.

Reuben had spoken up as less guilty than the rest. Simeon was next oldest. This may be the reason for Joseph's choice to bind Simeon and keep him while the others went back for Benjamin.

**GEN 42:25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.**

**GEN 42:26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.**

They were to receive the grain for which they had come. Joseph instructed his underlings to fill their sacks. But they were also to place each man's money into his sack. In addition, they were to be given provisions to nourish them on the way back to Canaan which might take as much as three weeks.

**GEN 42:27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth.**

On the way home one of the brothers prepared to feed his donkey. They had stopped at what is called the "inn." Probably all that this meant is that there was a place where they could rest safely overnight. When the man opened the sack to feed the animal, he found the money which he had paid for the grain in his sack.

**GEN 42:28 And he said unto his brethren, My**

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money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

The man immediately informed the rest of the brothers that he had found the money. When they heard this distressing news their heart stopped. Surely God was punishing them for their past wrongs. Now they feared to go back to Egypt because they might have to face the charge of theft.

GEN 42:29 And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,

GEN 42:30 The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

GEN 42:31 And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies:

GEN 42:32 We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

GEN 42:33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:

GEN 42:34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

They came to Jacob and repeated to him all that had taken place up to that time. If they brought Benjamin, they could come back and get Simeon, and could move

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freely about in Egypt. Otherwise there would be no more food available.

**GEN 42:35** And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

After Jacob had heard these words, each of the brothers emptied his sack and it was found that all of the money they had paid was in their sacks.

They certainly had reason to be fearful. They were in an almost impossible situation.

There are those who wonder why the rest of the brothers did not discover the money in their sacks as soon as they were told earlier that one had found his money. Why did they wait until they had gone the rest of the way home before investigating? The answer is likely that the money was placed in the bottom of all the sacks except that one. The others found their only when they emptied their sacks.

How many sacks were there? At first reading it sounds as though each of the brothers had only a single sack. This would hardly be enough to last for any length of time for the entire family. It may be that each had a smaller sack with provisions for the donkeys, and larger sacks filled with grain. There may have been a large number of donkeys.

**GEN 42:36** And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.



Jacob was grief stricken. He felt that Joseph and Simeon were both permanently taken away. Not only that; they were asking that he send Benjamin away also. He felt that the entire world had turned against him.

**GEN 42:37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.**

Reuben tried to console his father. He offered his own two sons as a pledge that Benjamin would be returned. This may seem strange on the part of Reuben. What would be gained by Jacob slaying his two grandchildren? Nevertheless, it was all that Reuben could do. He tried as best he could.

**GEN 42:38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.**

Jacob was adamant. Benjamin could not go. Rachel's older son was gone. Now he was in terrible danger of losing the younger son of his favorite wife. If something serious was to happen to Benjamin he felt that it would cause him to die. He could not agree to send him.

## Chapter 43

**GEN 43:1** And the famine was sore in the land.

**GEN 43:2** And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

The famine continued in Canaan until the grain which had been obtained in Egypt was nearing its end. Jacob either forgot what his sons had told him about the need for Benjamin being with them when they returned, or else he felt the time which had passed by had caused the man in Egypt to forget what he had said. He told them they must go back and replenish the dwindling food supplies.

**Gen 43:3** And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

Judah was then acting as main spokesman for the sons. He protested that they were told in no uncertain terms not to come back unless Benjamin accompanied them. They would not even be allowed to see the man. Even if they did, they might end up in prison.

**GEN 43:4** If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:

**GEN 43:5** But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

Judah was not being insolent toward his father. He was only stating what he knew to be the facts. There



was absolutely no reason to make the trip if Benjamin did not go. It would only be a waste of time and effort.

**GEN 43:6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?**

Jacob scolded them for even having mentioned that they had a brother back home. If they had not said anything about him, this problem would not have arisen.

**GEN 43:7 And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?**

The brothers explained that they had not volunteered the information. The man had plainly asked them about both their father and any brothers they might have. They would not have mentioned him if the man had not specifically asked.

Notice that it is always “the man.” They did not know he was Joseph, and they did not refer to him by his Egyptian name “Zaphnath-paeneah.”

**GEN 43:8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.**

Judah added that it was vital for Benjamin to go. If he did not go the entire family would die, including Benjamin.

The word which is translated “lad” here can mean someone older than we normally refer to by the English word. Benjamin was in his twenties. It would have been better to translate the Hebrew word as youth rather than lad.

**GEN 43:9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:**

Judah made a self sacrificial offer. He would become a surety for Benjamin. Supposedly he was saying he would remain in Egypt in Benjamin’s place if that became necessary. Certainly he was saying that Jacob could place the entire blame upon him if Benjamin suffered injury.

**GEN 43:10 For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.**

Judah reminded his father that if he had not waited so long to think about sending them back, they could already have made this second trip and returned.

**GEN 43:11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:**

How could they have sent several kinds of food as presents if the famine had left them in such dire straits?



Perhaps the answer lies in the nature of these gifts. They were primarily the products of trees. These plants survive, even in severe drought, and produce small amounts of such items as are listed.

Gifts were often presented to men of influence in order to gain an opportunity to come into their presence.

**GEN 43:12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:**

To make certain that they were not accused of theft during the first trip, they were to take enough money to pay for the grain they had brought back then, and also add enough to pay for that which they desired to buy the second time.

**GEN 43:13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:**

This statement by Jacob must have tugged at the very heart and soul. They had permission to take Benjamin with them.

**GEN 43:14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.**

It was certainly possible that he might lose Benjamin as well as Joseph. Not only that, all of his sons could be retained in Egypt and he would never see any of them again. If such did take place, he must place matters in the hands of God. He could do nothing more than he had

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done to insure their safety.

Most of us reach the condition in which Jacob found himself. Circumstances are such that health, family relationships or financial affairs get completely out of hand. It is wise for us to follow the same path as Jacob did. Lay things in the lap of God Almighty. He cares. It may not look so at the moment. It will in the end.

GEN 43:15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

The brothers took the money, the presents and their brother Benjamin and went back to Egypt. Any difficulty they might have had gaining admittance into the presence of Joseph is not revealed. He may well have instructed his inferiors to watch for them and inform him when they came back.

GEN 43:16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.

As soon as Joseph saw the extra man with them he realized they had taken him seriously and had brought his beloved brother with them. It would have gone harshly with them if they had come without him. Now that he was present Joseph was ready to welcome them with a grand celebration. There would be a feast at noon and they were to dine with him.

GEN 43:17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.



GEN 43:18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

The brothers were ready to panic. They were very much afraid that they had been brought to the house of Joseph in order that they might be arrested and made slaves, and that their donkeys might be confiscated and used by the Egyptians.

GEN 43:19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

Thinking it might be wise to plead with the steward before they even entered the house, they truthfully explained just what had happened when they found the money in their sacks in the previous trip.

GEN 43:20 And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

GEN 43:21 And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

GEN 43:22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

They assured the steward that they had brought both the money for the first trip and also money for this



second purchase. They had no idea how the money got into their sacks before.

GEN 43:23 And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

It was not God that had placed the money in the sacks directly. But, God was surely behind the command Joseph gave to the steward to put it there.

The steward had heard about their God, perhaps from Joseph. It is also possible that Joseph had appointed a Hebrew steward who knew of Jehovah.

Simeon, who had been held until the brothers returned with Benjamin, was brought out into their presence. Joseph had kept his word about Simeon.

GEN 43:24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

As we have mentioned before, the provision of water for the washing of the feet is a mark of hospitality in that area of the world, particularly in that time. The steward was doing everything possible to make the brothers feel comfortable.

GEN 43:25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

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the nuts and other gifts they had brought with them. They would be ready when Joseph appeared.

**GEN 43:26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.**

In this verse and also in verse twenty-eight we find a repetition of the fulfillment of Joseph's dream of his brothers bowing down before him.

**GEN 43:27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?**

Again he asked them concerning the condition of their father. They must have wondered why this high official in Egypt had such an intense interest in their father. Joseph knew he must be very old and there was a possibility that he had expired.

**GEN 43:28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.**

**GEN 43:29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.**

He was assured that their father was still alive. Then, as he surveyed the group, his eyes fell upon Benjamin. This was his only full brother. He asked them to verify that this was truly the one for whom his heart had longed. When he found out it was, he asked God's



blessings upon him. When he used the term “my son” he was only indicating an age difference between himself and Benjamin.

**GEN 43:30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.**

Joseph found it necessary to excuse himself hurriedly because he was so filled with emotion. He went to his own private quarters for a while and wept with joy.

**GEN 43:31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.**

It was necessary for him to wash his face to cleanse the tear stains before he reentered the room. Then he gave directions for the food to be set upon the table.

**GEN 43:32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.**

Egyptians would not eat at the same table with the Hebrew “shepherd people.” Joseph was a prestigious official and so he had a table to himself. There were three tables, one for Joseph, one for the brothers and one for the Egyptians.

**GEN 43:33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest**





**according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.**

Then a wondrous thing was noted. As they took their assigned positions at the table, the oldest was seated. Then the next oldest was seated beside him. The rest were seated in order according to their age. How did this Egyptian officer know how old each of them was? Something very strange was going on. The chances against such a thing happening were astronomical.

**GEN 43:34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.**

The messes which were sent from before him were special items of high quality which he was using to demonstrate his friendship. They already had been served food. This was extra. That which he sent to Benjamin was five times as much as he sent to any of the others. This was surely a test to see if any animosity would be shown by his preferential treatment of Benjamin. It did not have any negative effect. They ate and drank and all enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

The passage is not a license to use alcoholic beverages until one becomes drunken. It does not say they became drunk. It says they drank, and rejoiced together.

## *Chapter 44*

**GEN 44:1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.**

Joseph knew very well that after the experience of finding their money in their sacks on the first trip, the brothers would not take too long to check them out this time also. This time the money was put in the mouth of each sack where it would be easily seen.

They would find both the money and the abundance of food. This would fill their hearts with joy and spirits would be raised to a high level. He had a reason for this apparent generosity.

**GEN 44:2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.**

The steward was told to put the same in the sack of Benjamin. But, there was an added item. Joseph's own silver cup was to be placed in Benjamin's sack.

**GEN 44:3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.**

**GEN 44:4 And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?**

**GEN 44:5 Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.**

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GEN 44:6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

Early in the morning they were sent on their way. Before they had hardly gotten started, Joseph sent the steward after them with the command to demand of them why they had treated him wickedly when he had been so kind and generous to them.

The steward carried out Joseph's instructions to the letter.

GEN 44:7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

GEN 44:8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

They protested vehemently. Why would they bring back the money from Canaan if they were intent on stealing anything from Egypt? In the sight of God, they had not done any such thing!

GEN 44:9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

They were all so confident that the charge of theft was false, they offered to let any one of them with whom the silver cup be found be killed, and every one of them would become slaves.



GEN 44:10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

The steward agreed that the one with whom the cup was found would be made a servant. He did not agree that he should be killed. He was the only one who was to be blamed. The rest would be considered innocent.

GEN 44:11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

GEN 44:12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Each quickly unloaded his sack from the donkeys and opened the sacks that they might be examined. The steward purposely began with the oldest of the brothers and moved to the next younger. Again they must have wondered how he knew the ages of each of them.

The silver cup was found in the sack of Benjamin.

GEN 44:13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

Their grief was immense. They loaded back the donkeys and returned to the city where Joseph had entertained them.

We do not know the name of the city. It seems that this would be helpful to us. God does not always



agree with us on what details should be included in the revelation.

GEN 44:14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

Over and over again we find the fulfillment of Joseph's dream that his brothers would bow down before him.

GEN 44:15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

There is a difficulty in this verse. Joseph certainly left his brothers with the impression that he used the silver cup for the purpose of divination. This is in direct conflict with the command of God that his people were not to practice divination. (See below.)

Deu 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

Deu 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Deu 18:12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Either Joseph did actually use the cup for divination, or else he was deceiving his brothers into thinking that he did. Of course either of these alternatives could be true. I believe, however, that since this is all a part of a larger deception on the part of Joseph he was only



causing them to think he used it to divine.

There is no mention of divining, or divination previous to this account in Genesis 44. The command in Deuteronomy was later. This could also have a bearing on Joseph's words and actions.

GEN 44:16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.

Judah had emerged as the leader of the brothers not long before this. Thus, he took the initiative here. He admitted that there was nothing they could bring forth that would prove their innocence. God must have decided to punish them for their past sins. All of them must admit that they were guilty and become servants in Egypt. Judah definitely did not want to go back and face his father Jacob without Benjamin by his side.

GEN 44:17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Joseph acted as if he would have none of it. That would be wrong. He would not place all of them in servitude. Only the guilty party would be held. The rest were quite free to go back to their home.

Joseph was attempting to find out just how completely his brothers had changed since he was sold into Egypt. At that time they had no concern for either himself or their father. Would they now show such concern for Benjamin



and Jacob; or would they decide this was a way to rid themselves of another favorite son who stood in line to receive future blessings greater than any of them?

GEN 44:18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

Judah's plea in answer to Joseph's suggestion has touched the hearts of multiplied millions since he first made the reply. It has caused him to be called a type of Jesus Christ in that he offered himself in the place of Benjamin.

It was through Judah rather than through any of his brothers that our Lord came. Revelation 5:5 calls Christ the "Lion of the tribe of Judah."

GEN 44:19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

GEN 44:20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

GEN 44:21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

GEN 44:22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

Joseph had his answer as to the callousness of his brothers with regard to their father. They could not bear



to think of what might happen to him if Benjamin did not return with them.

GEN 44:23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

GEN 44:24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

GEN 44:25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.

GEN 44:26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

GEN 44:27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

GEN 44:28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

Joseph had no doubt wondered what his brothers said to his father when they returned home after selling him to the Ishmeelites. Here is his answer. They had allowed Jacob to believe he had been torn to pieces by wild beasts.

GEN 44:29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

GEN 44:30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

GEN 44:31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and



thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

Judah had not the least doubt as to what the results would be if they went back without their youngest brother. It would kill Jacob with grief.

GEN 44:32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

GEN 44:33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

Judah had made a promise to Jacob that if anything were to happen to Benjamin, he would place himself in the stead of his brother. He was ready to make good on that promise. He would take the blame for the theft of the cup and become a servant, if only Benjamin was allowed to go back.

GEN 44:34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Even the severest of critics of the Bible admit that this speech of Judah is one of the most beautiful ever recorded. It is little wonder that God chose him rather than Reuben, Simeon or Levi to be a progenitor of the Saviour of the world.

Chapter 45

GEN 45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

The emotional load which came to bear on Joseph as a result of the passionate plea of Judah was more than he could handle. He had to hurriedly dismiss all those present who were not members of his family.

After all had departed, he revealed his identity to his brothers. He had help himself under control much longer than he would have liked to. But there was a very strong need to see what the spiritual condition of those who had sold him into bondage was. If they had reacted differently with respect to holding Benjamin while the rest returned to their home and their father, he would have treated them very differently.

GEN 45:2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

The tears must have been trickling down his face before this outburst. His feelings had been intensifying from the time he first recognized that his brothers had come to Egypt to buy grain.

Most present readers will at some time or another in their lives wept with joy. Such were Joseph's tears and lamentation. He had reason to believe that all the wrongs of the past might be forgotten and his family could be welded together again in love and affection.

The Egyptians who heard his lamentation directly were those who had just been dismissed and were still within hearing range of his cries. The house of Pharaoh

probably heard of his weeping through the lips of those who had been close by.

GEN 45:3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

What would those three words “I am Joseph.” have done to the hearts of his brethren? They must have been just as truly overcome as was Joseph. They were unable to make a reply to his words, partly from surprise and partly from fear of what he might do to them in retribution for their cruel treatment over twenty years ago.

GEN 45:4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

It did not take long for Joseph to at least partially dispel their fears. He invited them to come close to him as he repeated his statement that he was truly their long absent brother.

There is indication here that up to this time he had remained at a distance from them as might be expected in the case of a powerful dignitary. This distance was closed rapidly with his call for them to draw near.

GEN 45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

In spite of the fact that these brothers had been in the forefront in selling him into Egyptian bondage, God's providential hand was directing the entire series of events. He had been sent into Egypt in order that the lives of the Egyptians might be saved as the harvest was carefully saved, but also that his own family might be able to survive.

GEN 45:6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

The brothers had not had access to this information before this. All they could know was that this famine had brought suffering and want for two whole years.

For the next five years the grain would not produce heads or ears, and therefore there would be no harvest. There would not be enough water for the seed to sprout and grow.

GEN 45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

There is more to this verse than what appears on the surface. Surely, Joseph is saying that by the things that had taken place, his kin would be able to see their children and their children's children. But the posterity of Judah in particular would include the Son of God. Through Him would come a great deliverance to far more than these brothers could possibly envision.

GEN 45:8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father



to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

They need not think that Joseph would hold them responsible for what had happened. God had raised him from the prison to the palace. He had even been privileged to give Pharaoh himself advice. He had been appointed as a potentate over all the land of Egypt. They could forget their fears of retribution.

GEN 45:9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

He did not just say, "Go up to my father." He added the word "haste." Tell my father what I have told you and also tell him I desire for him to come to Egypt quickly. There is no time to waste.

GEN 45:10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

It is nearly certain that Joseph had already asked permission from Pharaoh to offer a dwelling place in the land of Goshen to his family. This land was the most fertile and productive pasture land in the country. It certainly lies in stark contrast to what is said later in the book of Exodus where it is stated that "There arose a king who knew not Joseph." This one had been grateful and exceedingly helpful in every way possible.



GEN 45:11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

GEN 45:12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

GEN 45:13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

They should be persuaded by this time that it was truly Joseph who was speaking to them. He was speaking personally and not through an interpreter. He was speaking in their own language. He knew too much about them for his comments to be anything but the truth.

They must hurry and unite the family in the land of Egypt. Little did he realize that he was being instrumental in initiating a period of four hundred years of slavery for Israel in that land.

GEN 45:14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

GEN 45:15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

He was exceedingly glad to see all of his brothers and make himself known to them. He was even more overjoyed to embrace his full brother Benjamin. He hugged him and gave him the kiss of friendship which is common in that land.

GEN 45:16 And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren



are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

GEN 45:17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

GEN 45:18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

When Pharaoh had heard of the coming of Joseph's brothers he welcomed the opportunity to invite them as inhabitants of Egypt. Joseph was to tell them to go home and get their families and return with them to Egypt where they would be allowed to eat from the best of what was there.

GEN 45:19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

GEN 45:20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

They were even to take wagons home with them to transport their families and their goods as they came back. There was not need for them to worry about bringing anything other than the necessities for the trip. They would be provided with everything else they needed when they arrived.

GEN 45:21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.



The wagons may have two wheeled with wooden wheels. There were many pictures of such wagons in the history of Egypt. Roads would have either been nonexistent or very primitive and rough.

GEN 45:22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

Benjamin received a much greater gift than the other brothers. This was still a test of the former jealous attitudes of the rest. In addition to a larger number of changes in garment Benjamin was given three hundred pieces of silver. This was a very large amount of money. A slave was sometimes bought for thirty pieces of silver.

GEN 45:23 And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

GEN 45:24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

Joseph added a very important warning to them. They were not to “fall out” on the way. This could mean either of two things. It could mean that he wanted them to avoid any arguments which would divide them while they were making the trip. It could also have meant that he was warning them to complete the trip rather than going home and then failing to come back.



GEN 45:25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

GEN 45:26 And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

These two verses are not telling us Jacob had heart failure and died when he heard this joyous news. It is saying he was dumbfounded and found it nearly impossible to believe what he had been told.

GEN 45:27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

When he had heard the entire story, and when he saw the many wagons that had been sent to carry all of them back into Egypt, he was invigorated as if he had been dead and had come to life. The news had given new hope to one who had about decided he would be bereaved of all of his sons.

GEN 45:28 And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

It was not so! He was going to be able to see Joseph, whom he had long thought to be dead. He readily accepted the invitation of Pharaoh to come and live in the land of Egypt.

Chapter 46

GEN 46:1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

We will find both Israel and Jacob used to describe this man now. Any knowledgeable reader will recognize him by either designation.

Jacob must have had a degree of hesitation in accepting the invitation to move his family from Canaan to Egypt. His father, Isaac, had been forbidden to go there. He had been living in Canaan which they understood to be the land that God had promised to His people. He needed assurance that he was not acting contrary to the will of Jehovah before he departed.

God had appeared to him on several previous occasions to help him make major decisions. Beersheba was the place where his ancestors had communed with the Almighty. It might well have seemed the most appropriate way to secure confirmation of God's approval.

GEN 46:2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

He was rewarded for his dependence upon God. God called to him in a night vision as He had done numerous other times with several persons. Jacob was ready for the message.

GEN 46:3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:



It was permissible for Jacob and his companions to enter Egypt. God had a reason for sending them. It was His intention to build that small band into a powerful nation.

GEN 46:4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

God would go with them. He would be with them while they were there. He would bring them out again. When Jacob died, Joseph would be the one to close his eyes in that last sleep of death.

GEN 46:5 And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

Jacob might have still been the patriarch of the family, but he was now feeble and aged. His sons had to take the lead in seeing that he and their own families made the trip successfully.

GEN 46:6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:

Pharaoh had encouraged them to leave their possessions behind. He would supply all their needs when they arrived. In spite of Pharaoh's offer, they decided to take their livestock and all they could transport along with them.



GEN 46:7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

Interestingly, this list does not include either his son's wives, his daughters in law, or his sons in law. There were obviously a larger number of travelers than the total count which is given in the following verses. It may be that there were also some daughters who were not mentioned. There was probably some reason for giving the names of two, Dinah and Serah, while others were unnamed.

GEN 46:8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.

We are now given a list of those described in verse seven.

GEN 46:9 And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.

Each of the sons children will be listed.
There are four sons of Reuben.
The total is five, counting Reuben.

GEN 46:10 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman.

There are six sons of Simeon.
The total is seven, counting Simeon.

GEN 46:11 And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath,

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**and Merari.**

There are three sons of Levi.  
The total is four, counting Levi.

**GEN 46:12 And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul.**

There are seven sons of Judah. However Er and Onan had died in Canaan and are not counted.  
The total is six, counting Judah, but not counting either Er or Onan.

**GEN 46:13 And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron.**

There are four sons of Issachar.  
The total is five, counting Issachar.

**GEN 46:14 And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel.**

There are three sons of Zebulun.  
The total is four, counting Zebulun.

**GEN 46:15 These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three.**

Thus, we have the following:

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| Reuben | 5 souls |
| Simeon | 7 souls |
| Levi   | 4 souls |

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Judah 6 souls
Issachar 5 souls
Zebulun 4 souls
Dinah 1 soul

A total of 32 souls through Leah.

If we count Jacob we have the 33 given in the verse.

GEN 46:16 And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

There are seven sons of Gad.

There are eight souls, including Gad.

GEN 46:17 And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel.

There are four sons, one daughter and two grandsons of Asher.

There are eight souls, including Asher.

GEN 46:18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls.

The total of sixteen souls can only be arrived at by eliminating the daughter, Serah, from the list.

We have then:

Gad 9 souls

Asher 7 souls

A total of 16 souls through Zilpah.

GEN 46:19 The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joseph, and Benjamin.



GEN 46:20 And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

There are two sons of Joseph.

There are three souls, including Joseph.

GEN 46:21 And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard.

There are ten sons of Benjamin.

There are eleven souls, including Benjamin.

GEN 46:22 These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen.

And so we have:

Joseph 3 souls

Benjamin 11 souls

A total of 14 souls through Rachel.

GEN 46:23 And the sons of Dan; Hushim.

There is one son of Dan.

There are two souls, including Dan.

GEN 46:24 And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem.

There are four sons of Naphtali.

There are five souls, including Naphtali.

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**GEN 46:25 These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven.**

Thus, we have:

|            |                         |
|------------|-------------------------|
| Dan        | 2 souls                 |
| Naphtali   | 5 souls                 |
| A total of | 7 souls through Bilhah. |

**GEN 46:26 All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six;**

**GEN 46:27 And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.**

The number seventy is arrived at by adding the total souls through all four women.

|            |                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| Leah       | 33 souls                         |
| Zilpah     | 16 souls                         |
| Rachel     | 14 souls                         |
| Bilhah     | <u>7</u> souls                   |
| A total of | 70 souls through all four women. |

If we subtract the two sons of Joseph who were born in Egypt and the two sons of Judah, Er and Onan, whom the Lord slew, we have the number sixty-six.

It would be dishonest not to refer to the statement of Stephen in Acts 7:14 that seventy-five souls went down into Egypt. Was this one of Robert Ingersoll's "Mistakes of Moses?" Hardly! As pointed out before, there were no doubt wives of the sons who accompanied them but did





not come from the loins of Jacob. There are other possible explanations also.

The number seventy is of peculiar importance in the scriptures. Other places where this number is found are:

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Seventy nations | Genesis 10         |
| Seventy elders  | Numbers 11:16      |
| Seventy years   | 2 Chronicles 36:21 |
| Seventy weeks   | Daniel 9:24        |
| Seventy years   | Psalm 90:10        |

It may also be that the number seven, which is mentioned so often, has a similar significance. Perhaps even more important is the fact that from this very small number of persons, God would build a physical nation, out of which would come a spiritual kingdom as numerous as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven, ruled by the His Son and our Lord.

**GEN 46:28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.**

Judah was now established as the active leader of the sons of Jacob. Accordingly, he was the one who was sent ahead to meet Joseph before the rest arrived. Joseph would show Judah how to direct the rest into the land of Goshen where they were to be located.

**GEN 46:29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.**

After the family arrived in the Goshen, or the land of Rameses, Joseph had his chariot prepared and traveled

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to the area in order to greet his father whom he had not seen in all those long years.

The reunion was highly charged emotionally. The two men embraced one another and Joseph once more broke out into tears of joy. It was not just a sob or two. It was a prolonged embrace with many tears.

GEN 46:30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

Jacob felt that his life could be successfully concluded with this coming together. He had not dreamed that he would ever see his eldest through Rachel again. But here he was, alive and well. All was well with the world!

GEN 46:31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;

Joseph's relationship with Pharaoh was mutually trusting. Pharaoh had trusted Joseph with nearly unlimited authority. Joseph responded by keeping Pharaoh posted concerning important events. Pharaoh needed to know his family had arrived.

GEN 46:32 And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

Joseph made quite sure that Pharaoh knew these men were shepherds. This would be important in that they could not settle just anywhere. Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians and things would not have gone well if the family had been unwisely placed in the land.

GEN 46:33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?

GEN 46:34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

He made certain that their occupation as shepherds was made emphatic when they were called before Pharaoh. There must be no confusion.

By being isolated from the Egyptians in the land of Goshen, there would not be the friction which could have arisen otherwise. In addition, there would not be the temptation to intermarry with the sons and daughters of an idolatrous people. God's people must be given every opportunity to remain spiritually pure and true to Him as they grew from seventy to over two million souls.

Chapter 47

GEN 47:1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

Pharaoh obviously knew the family of Joseph was coming. This was only an announcement by Joseph that they had arrived, and that they had brought their livestock along with them. Pharaoh had previously told them they need not bring anything with them.

GEN 47:2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

There is some discussion of the translation here. Some believe the original language involved more than random selection. All the casual student has to work with is the fact that not all of the brethren were presented to Pharaoh.

GEN 47:3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.

As Joseph had suggested, Pharaoh asked them about their means of livelihood. They replied, just as Joseph had instructed them, that they were shepherds, and that this had been the occupation of their fathers before them.

GEN 47:4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants

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**have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.**

They requested permission to graze their animals in the land of Goshen because of the shortage of pasture in the land of Canaan. A sojourner is one who moves about rather than settling in one place. They were not asking Pharaoh for a deed to the land. They only desired a place to pasture their flocks and herds until the famine came to an end.

**GEN 47:5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: GEN 47:6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.**

Pharaoh was true to his previous promise to Joseph. His family was welcome to move into the very finest pasture land in Egypt.

Now we have a surprise. The commentaries almost without exception emphasize the hatred of the Egyptians for shepherds, and suggest that part of the reason was that shepherds ate the very animals that the Egyptians worshipped. Why then did Pharaoh own cattle over which some of Joseph's men could rule? The suggestion has been made that the word rendered as cattle here included more than sheep and cows, and covered personal possessions.

I think that suggestion is incorrect. Attention is called to verse seventeen. The Egyptians did have cattle in the same sense as did the Hebrews.



**GEN 47:7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.**

Joseph was proud to introduce his aged father Jacob to Pharaoh. Jacob then pronounced a blessing on Pharaoh in gratitude for the favors extended to him and his family.

While the Egyptians were hospitable toward the Israelites, they prospered. Later, when the Pharaoh arose who despised the Israelites, the Egyptians suffered horrible plagues from the hand of Jehovah.

**GEN 47:8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?**

Pharaoh was impressed with the age of the patriarch. He wanted to know how old he was.

**GEN 47:9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.**

Jacob's reply was that he had lived one hundred and thirty years. This was less than the ages of either Abraham who lived to be one hundred seventy-five, or Isaac who had reached one hundred eighty, but his own years had been filled with much trouble.

If the reader will ponder this for just a moment he will be in full agreement with Jacob's statement. From the time of Esau's hatred to the time when he was required to send Benjamin into Egypt, he had endured one trauma right after another.

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GEN 47:10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

GEN 47:11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

GEN 47:12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

Joseph aided the family in moving into the land of Goshen, or Rameses. Then he saw to it that they received a ration of food which was according to the size of each of the families.

GEN 47:13 And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

GEN 47:14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

GEN 47:15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth.

The famine had become so serious that the Egyptians were begging Joseph to sell them grain for food. He proceeded to do that until the government had collected all of the money the people had possessed.

The people then wanted to know what could be done, they had no more money. Were they destined to die?

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**GEN 47:16** And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

**GEN 47:17** And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.

Joseph had a solution. They must bring their cattle and sell them to the government in exchange for food.

As I pointed out previously, the word cattle did include horses, flocks, herds and asses.

For an entire year the people used this method of survival.

**GEN 47:18** When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:

**GEN 47:19** Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.

The next year they came to Joseph again, telling him they had no more cattle to exchange for food. The only thing they could do was to offer their land and themselves as bondservants.

**GEN 47:20** And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.





**GEN 47:21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.**

This purchase of the people's land continued until Pharaoh owned all of the land. The people were gathered near the cities in order that food could be distributed more easily.

**GEN 47:22 Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.**

There was one exception to the purchase of the land. The land which Pharaoh had assigned to the priests was not purchased. These were the priests of the Egyptian's religions. They were not the priests of God's people. Apparently Joseph was restricted by the will of Pharaoh from acquiring the priest's land. We have here an example of a national religion supported by the state.

**GEN 47:23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.**

**GEN 47:24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.**

The famine was about over. This could be known because of Joseph's revelation from God. This meant there would be a need to prepare for a crop the next season.



The arrangement was made that the people would have access to the land, and they would be provided seed to sow the land, but they would have to return one fifth of the harvest to the government. This was not an oppressive amount. The governments of many nations in the modern world, including the United States, collect a larger percent when all types of taxes are considered.

**GEN 47:25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.**

**GEN 47:26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part, except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.**

The people were highly grateful for the arrangement. They had promised to become bondservants to Pharaoh. They were ready to keep their promise. Certainly they were willing to give the government the twenty percent which had been asked.

Again the priests were given special favor. The government did not collect the fifth part from the land of the priests.

**GEN 47:27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.**

Israel prospered and grew rapidly in population. It has been stated that if they had increased at a rate of five percent per year, they could have grown from the number who entered Canaan to the number which left at the time of the exodus.



The rate of growth of the population of the United States is about one percent per year. But five percent is not necessarily impossible. Families were large and the hand of God was involved.

**GEN 47:28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.**

Jacob declared that after he had seen Joseph his life was full and he was ready to die. It was to be seventeen years after that before his death at age one hundred forty-seven.

**GEN 47:29 And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:**

As is the case in many instances, Jacob realized he was nearing the point of departure. He asked for Joseph to come to him. Then he requested that Joseph make a solemn promise not to bury him in Egypt.

**GEN 47:30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.**

He wished to be taken back into Canaan where he could be buried with Abraham and Isaac in the cave of Macphelah. That was the land God had promised. That was the land in which he wanted to sleep as he awaited the resurrection.



**GEN 47:31 And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.**

Joseph made the solemn promise which Jacob had requested. Then his father, who had apparently raised himself to a sitting posture, bowed his head in a grateful act of worship toward the Almighty.

The reader will wish to compare Hebrews 11:21 with the present verse.



## *Chapter 48*

**GEN 48:1 And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.**

We are not told how long after the events of the previous chapter those of this chapter took place. Joseph had obviously returned home and had to be summoned back to Jacob's bedside.

For some reason, he decided to take his two sons with him. Ephraim and Manasseh were past twenty years of age at the time. Some of the later statements in the chapter might lead the Bible student to assume they were but small children. This appears not to be the case.

**GEN 48:2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.**

Jacob was informed that Joseph was on his way. When Jacob realized Joseph had arrived he summoned enough strength to sit up on the side of the bed.

**GEN 48:3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,**

**GEN 48:4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.**

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Jacob first of all reminded Joseph of the appearance of God to him at Luz, which he renamed Bethel. God had there extended the seed and the land promise to him. That was one of the reasons he had called for Joseph to come to him. He wished to discuss the extension of God's promise.

GEN 48:5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

He announced that he was now about to adopt Ephraim and Manasseh as his own children. Although truly his grandchildren, they would be considered his own children just as much as Reuben and Simeon were his own.

GEN 48:6 And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

The descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh would become equal in importance with respect to the inheritance to the rest of the sons. Each of them would receive a portion, thereby giving Joseph a double inheritance.

GEN 48:7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

Rachel had been Jacob's chosen wife from the beginning. Leah and the two concubines were not at the same level in his affections as was Rachel.



When he said Rachel had died by him, he was talking about her death when Benjamin was born. He had buried her with tears in his eyes near the village of Bethlehem.

GEN 48:8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?

Jacob realized there were others with Joseph. His eyes were dim by reason of age and he could not identify them by name.

GEN 48:9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

When Joseph replied that these were his two sons who had been born to him in Egypt, Jacob asked him to bring them close to him so that he could bless them.

GEN 48:10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

GEN 48:11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

When they had come close, Jacob threw his arms around his grandsons and kissed each of them. He was filled with thanksgiving for the opportunity to see them. This is not a contradiction. The blind can see in their own way. They do not have to see through their physical eyes. Jacob could probably see enough to discern their figures but not their specific facial features.



GEN 48:12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

This is the verse that leads the reader to conclude that Ephraim and Manasseh were small children. The translation says they were brought forth from “between” his knees. The original can also be translated as “near” his knees. This is the more acceptable translation, in view of the ages of the two.

Joseph then bowed deeply before his father. He was not worshipping his father. He was showing his enormous respect for him. The aged are more highly respected in the eastern countries than they are in the west.

GEN 48:13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

Joseph guided Manasseh to Jacob's right and Ephraim to his left as he moved them near to his father. Clearly, he expected the rights of the firstborn to be bestowed upon Manasseh.

GEN 48:14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

Jacob then placed his right hand upon the head of Ephraim rather than Manasseh, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh. He realized that the greater glory would fall upon the younger of the two.



For some reason, although God Himself first gave the principle of a double portion to the firstborn, He departed from that injunction on a number of occasions, beginning with Abel over Cain in the very beginning.

GEN 48:15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

Jacob first blessed Joseph. He reminded him that Jehovah had been with Abraham, with Isaac and with himself. The very food which he ate was supplied by the Father in heaven.

GEN 48:16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Who was this angel who had redeemed Jacob from all evil, and who was to bless Joseph's two sons? Without much controversy, Bible students believe the "Angel of the Lord" was the redeeming angel, and was also the Christ in a preincarnate form.

Jacob desired that the same angel who had blessed Abraham, Isaac and himself continue those blessings upon these sons of Joseph and allow them to become a genuine part of the seed promise.

GEN 48:17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand,

to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

GEN 48:18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

It was not Joseph's intention that Ephraim, who was the younger, receive the primary blessing. Thus, he lifted Jacob's hand from Ephraim's head and was ready to transfer it to the head of Manasseh. He thought his father was having trouble determining which of the sons was the older.

GEN 48:19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

Jacob corrected Joseph. He knew he had his hand on the younger of the two. But the younger would be greater than the older. He could have known this only by divine revelation. God had given him such information in the past, and now had repeated that process.

GEN 48:20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

Jacob told Joseph that his blessing would be brought about through his two sons. That which befell Ephraim and Manasseh could be considered at that which fell to Joseph's lot.



In this way, Rachel was allotted three portions of the inheritance, one for Benjamin and two for the two sons of Joseph. The number of tribes would still total twelve in that Levi received no inheritance.

GEN 48:21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

Joseph was informed that although he was about to die, God would see that his descendants returned to the land of Canaan. Joseph was buried in Canaan, but his seed did ultimately return to the promised land.

GEN 48:22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Commentators in general admit that the meaning of this verse is cloudy. Your present writer feels that the past tense used here is used to look forward to the time when the land of Canaan would be taken by military force from, not only the Amorites, but the various nations who were driven out from before them after the wilderness wanderings.

There are those who make an attempt to connect the territory of Shechem to this verse. That interpretation is less appropriate than the one in the previous paragraph.

Chapter 49

GEN 49:1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

There are both similarities and differences in that which occurred in this chapter of Genesis and that which occurs in the last moments of men and women's lives today. The last words of an aged parent may be engraved in the hearts of the descendants for decades. I can still hear my own father say to myself and another of his sons some words which were somewhat mysterious at the time. He said, "Boys, go do what you have to do." I know now that he was telling us life must not be wasted. There are opportunities which must not be wasted. They must be attended to.

Jacob had some last words for his twelve sons. His words, however, seem to have had some insight from God. We can see how the things Jacob said about the future of his twelve sons and their various tribes came true. Some of his words are still unclear to us today. Others are very clear.

Jacob's words are usually referred to as his blessings on his sons. This first verse of the chapter reveals that not all of the things which were to befall his sons and their descendants were blessings as we normally apply that word. Some of the predicted circumstances would have led to much sorrow, and would seem to be curses rather than blessings.

Since he informs them that these things will take place in the last days, we understand that he was talking about times far into the future rather than the days that immediately faced them.

GEN 49:2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

As we can see from the very last verse of this chapter, Jacob was sitting upon the edge of his bed as he spoke to his sons. He desired that they listen very carefully to the predictions he was about to make concerning the place of each of them in the new nation of Israel which was coming into being.

GEN 49:3 Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

Firstborn sons of a father are looked upon in pride. That father sees the opportunity of passing on the fountain of life which has been transmitted to him through the generations past. Even if he never has another child, he can see himself extended for at least one more generation. Thus Reuben reminded Jacob of his own dignity, strength and power.

GEN 49:4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

Liquid water flows with the path of least resistance. It takes the shape of the container in which it is placed. Reuben was not able to excel because of his weakness of character. He had actually taken his father's handmaid, Bilhah. This instability passed on to his descendants. We find no great leaders of Israel coming from the tribe of Reuben.



GEN 49:5 Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

Simeon and Levi were impulsive and prone to violence. When Dinah was defiled these two were leaders in taking vengeance through killing and maiming all of the men of the Shechemites when only one of them was guilty. God would see to it that their descendants were scattered and prevented from uniting and multiplying their dangerous inclinations.

In the case of Levi, his descendants were not provided with a land inheritance. They were scattered among all the various tribes as they fulfilled their priestly duties.

GEN 49:6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.

GEN 49:7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Almost nothing is said about the Simeonites in the days of the kings of Israel. They had been scattered both within and outside of Canaan.

GEN 49:8 Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Judah became the ruling tribe. Judah became the name of the southern portion of the Jewish nation. The word "Jew" is clearly a derivative of the name Judah. The



tribe of Judah would be respected by both it's enemies and the rest of the tribes descending from Jacob.

GEN 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

One is well advised not to disturb the lion while it is feasting upon it's prey. Judah would be capable of striking fear into the hearts of those who attempted to molest her.

GEN 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

The sceptre is the symbol of ruling power. When Esther had a conversation with Mordecai, she objected that if she appeared before the king and he failed to hold out his sceptre in approving of her presence, she could lose her life. Judah would become the tribe from which rulers controlled the entire Jewish nation.

This would be true until Shiloh arrived. The word Shiloh could have been translated as "He whose right it is." Jesus Christ is referred to in Revelation 5:5 as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." The rulership would then pass on to Christ who is the "King of kings" and the one whose rulership will extend into eternity.

GEN 49:11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his

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**garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:**

**GEN 49:12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.**

Judah was to be associated with productive land. There would be an abundance of grapes and milk. Beasts of burden would be available. Life in the tribe of Judah would be rich and full.

**GEN 49:13 Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.**

Not much is said here, or elsewhere in the Holy Scriptures that will give much meaning to this prediction. Tyre and Sidon were located in the far north of Canaan. Some have suggested that Zebulun's territory extended from the Mediterranean Sea to the Sea of Galilee and that Capernaum was located in that area. If so, Jesus spent some time in the land inherited by Zebulun.

**GEN 49:14 Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:**

The reading is not clear. Was Issachar couching down between the two burdens because of laziness? Or was the couching down as result of extremely heavy burdens which were impossible to carry?

**GEN 49:15 And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.**

This verse may well indicate that it was laziness which

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caused Issachar to couch down. He saw that it was easier to couch down than to fight against invaders. Because of his indolence he would then become a servant to others who could demand tribute from him.

GEN 49:16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

As the son of a concubine, Dan might have wondered if he would take his place among the sons of Jacob. He was assured that he would do so. Out of the tribe of Dan came some of the judges of Israel. Samson was of the tribe of Dan.

GEN 49:17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

Dan was compared to a serpent that is not seen easily, but that strikes at the passerby unexpectedly. He would attain his goals by cunning rather than by force.

GEN 49:18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

Jacob had been addressing his remarks to his various sons up to this point. Now he interrupted his comments by addressing the Lord. He seems to say he has spent much time in wondering just how God would bring His predictions to pass through Jacob's sons. God had promised a blessing to the world through Jacob's descendants. He was now close to death and had waited for many years to see some movement in that direction.



GEN 49:19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

The territory of Gad lay on the east side of the Jordan River. This meant close proximity to the enemies of God's people, such as the Ammonites, etc. There would be times when Gad would be attacked and overcome. This would not last. In the end Gad would defeat those who oppressed him.

GEN 49:20 Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

The land where Asher located was near Mount Carmel. It was fertile farmland and yielded harvests that would be considered food fit for a king.

GEN 49:21 Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

The hind is a deer. It is known for its fleetness of foot. It would be difficult to make a connection between the history of Naphtali and this quickness of foot. It is possible that the giving of goodly words is describing orators and poets. Deborah and Barak composed a song after the victory over Jabin and Sisera.

GEN 49:22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

After very brief statements about many of the other brothers, Jacob had much more to say about Joseph. Although God had already said that the rulership would



pass down through Judah, Jacob elaborated at length on the approval of God toward Joseph.

First, Joseph would be like a plant which had access to a nearby well. His branches would be rich and full.

GEN 49:23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

Joseph's descendants would not be immune to attack. There would be those who would hate him and persecute him.

GEN 49:24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

The enemies of Joseph would not prevail. He would be aided by Jehovah. In this instance God Himself seems to be the shepherd and the foundation stone of His people. One is caused to wonder if Jacob's words may refer to Christ as the Shepherd and Stone. Just how far did Jacob's predictions reach into the future?

GEN 49:25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

God would watch over Joseph's descendants and be with them in defence against those who hated them. Ephraim and Manasseh would be blessed by God from the heavens above and the earth below. The womb and the breast would be blessed as Joseph would be rewarded to make

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up for the offenses which his brothers laid upon him in separating him from the rest of the family as they sold him into Egypt.

**GEN 49:26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.**

Jacob's own blessings had been greater than those enjoyed by his ancestors. Now Joseph's blessings would even exceed those of Jacob. Only the tribe of Judah would be blessed to the degree of blessing provided for Joseph.

The entire northern kingdom became known as Ephraim at a later date.

**GEN 49:27 Benjamin shall ravine as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.**

A ravening wolf seeks out its prey and feeds upon it. Benjamin would do just that. King Saul was a Benjaminite. He was just such a person as might be described by the verse in front of us.

**GEN 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.**

And so, at this point Jacob has spoken of the destinies of each of the twelve sons. Although some of these pronouncements sound more like cursings than blessings,

they may have held warnings that could lead them to a better way of life.

One thing which must impress us is that God was constantly working in the background. His people are the apple of His eye. To whatever degree they will allow themselves to be used in His service, they will be blessed.

**GEN 49:29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,**

After the several predictions, Jacob was aware that he had very little time left. He requested that after his death his remains be taken to the cave that Abraham had purchased from Ephron the Hittite. There he could rest with his ancestors until the final resurrection.

**GEN 49:30 In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.**

I would have to ask directions to find the grave of my father and mother today. It was not so with Jacob. He was very well aware of the location of the bodies of Abraham and Isaac. It was a very special place and very dear to his heart.

**GEN 49:31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.**

He mentioned several who were buried in that cave of Machpelah. There were Abraham and Sarah. There were Isaac and Rebekah, and there was Leah. Why did Jacob not mention Rachel, who was his favorite wife in the past. Leah had been described as “tender eyed”. He had worked seven years for Rachel and then was disappointed when he was given Leah. Frankly, I do not understand his mention of Leah and his omission of Rachel.

**GEN 49:32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.**

He repeated the description of the cave one more time. It was the one which had been owned by the children of Heth. Jacob wants no misunderstanding as to his desired place of burial. He was precise and he was forceful.

**GEN 49:33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.**

Almost as if he knew ahead of time that these would be his last words to anyone on this earth, he summoned his last bit of energy and pulled his feet up on the bed and gave up the ghost. One of the great men of history had closed out his very mixed existence on earth. There had been much joy. There had been much sorrow. Although we are not the judge, we would like to think he will be raised from that cave of Machpelah to live in a place where all is joy and there is no sorrow.



## *Chapter 50*

**GEN 50:1** And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

What a flood of memories must have passed through the mind of Joseph as he bent down over his father, Jacob! He had been a favorite son in those early years. Then there were the tears of separation when he was sold into Egyptian bondage by his envious brothers.

This was followed by his rise to power through the providence of God. No doubt he wondered if he would ever see Jacob again. With the coming of the famine, he had been reunited with his father and his brothers. It is little wonder that he wept at his father's death. So much time had been lost when they could have been together.

I recall the death of my own father. He was a demanding parent. I was often scolded when I did not do what I was expected to do, in the way he expected it done. I can remember thinking bitter thoughts about those reprimands. Yet, when the time came that his death separated us, I did not think of those difficult days. I thought only of how much I loved him for properly guiding me in the ways I needed to travel. I think I know something of Joseph's feelings as he bent down over the lifeless form of his father.

**GEN 50:2** And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

The Egyptians are world famous for their knowledge of embalming. They removed the entrails and the brain of

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the deceased. The body was soaked in a preservative and then wrapped with strips of cloth. The result was the mummy which resisted corruption for centuries.

GEN 50:3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.

In addition to the regular period of mourning over those who had been embalmed, the Egyptians demonstrated their affection and respect for Joseph by extending the mourning period beyond that which usually occurred.

GEN 50:4 And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

Joseph had a request that could well have been denied. The reader will note that even with Joseph's past recognition by Pharaoh, he made his request humbly. Pharaoh could well have decided that this was a ruse to escape from Egypt. Therefore Joseph requested. He did not demand.

GEN 50:5 My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

Pharaoh was familiar with the family of Joseph, as well as with Joseph himself. Joseph made his plea in behalf of his father's lifelong desire to be buried in the land of Canaan. Jacob's father and grandfather had been buried

in the cave of Machpelah which had been purchased for that purpose by Abraham.

It was honorable on the part of Joseph to present his father's wish to Pharaoh. Nevertheless, it could very well have been rejected. It would be completely up to Pharaoh as to whether or not Joseph could leave. His promise to return certainly did not hurt his chances of approval.

GEN 50:6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

Pharaoh was gracious in his reply. Joseph would be permitted to travel to Canaan and bury his father beside Abraham and Isaac. Joseph's promise could be kept.

GEN 50:7 And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

Not only did Pharaoh give his permission for Joseph to do as he had asked. He furnished an entourage to accompany this servant whom he had grown to respect. This must have been quite a funeral procession. Jacob had been a good man. He deserved the respect which was being paid to him.

GEN 50:8 And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

By leaving the flocks, their herds and their children behind, Joseph was indicating to Pharaoh that he would most certainly return. He and his family were shepherds.

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They would not leave the flocks, or their children behind and never return for them. Pharoah was safe in giving permission to leave Egypt.

**GEN 50:9** And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

We are not told just what number of persons there were in the caravan. The text leaves us with confidence that there were over one hundred.

**GEN 50:10** And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

**GEN 50:11** And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan.

We have a problem in the text here. "Beyond Jordan" usually means "west of Canaan." Did the company travel around the south end of Canaan and come into Canaan from the east? The cave of Machpelah was on the west side of the Jordan River. Whatever the case, when the people in the land of Canaan saw how seriously the members of the caravan were mourning, they decided this must be an extremely serious burial ceremony. They even named the area after the sad event.

**GEN 50:12** And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:



**GEN 50:13 For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.**

Like Abraham and his descendants, we often desire to be buried in the family cemetery. This is an interesting thought. Is there any real reason for this tradition?

I have heard one fine Bible teacher say that he wanted to be buried near those who were Christians. Then, in the resurrection, the first thing he would see would be those dear brothers and sisters in Christ who had also been raised from the darkness of death. I do not know whether this is a valid reason. We are told these things will take place in the twinkling of an eye.

**GEN 50:14 And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.**

Joseph kept his promise to return to Egypt. He was not the type of person who would make a solemn promise before both man and God, and then fail to keep it.

The entire company, both Israelites and Egyptians moved from Canaan back into the land of Egypt. This was to bring on a number of events which led up to the later exodus under the leadership of Moses.

**GEN 50:15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.**

Guilt is a monster. Joseph's brothers were having a difficult time truly believing that their brother had completely forgiven them for the horrible thing they did in selling him into slavery. They wondered just what they might have to suffer at the hands of their brother now that their father was no longer alive to hinder such action.

There are those today who repent of their sins and request that God forgive them for what they have done, and then are unable to believe God will forgive them. Dear friends, God will keep his promises. You may depend upon it. Joseph did, and God will too.

**GEN 50:16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,**

Why did they send a messenger to Joseph rather than going to him personally? Very likely the reason was that Joseph was in such a prominent position in Egypt that political protocol prevented them from approaching him without going through proper channels.

**GEN 50:17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.**

Another possible reason that the brothers did not go to Joseph personally is that they were ashamed to face him. It was a bit easier to beg his forgiveness through a third party than to meet him face to face with the request. The messenger was instructed to beg Joseph's forgiveness.

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They freely admitted their sin. Would Joseph hear their plea, or would he repay their evil deeds with severe punishment?

Joseph's answer was to weep over the difficulty of the situation. He did not harbor any malice in his heart. It grieved him that they were concerned over his possible retaliation. He wished them only the best.

GEN 50:18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

The prodigal son came home fearful that his father would not even take him back as a servant. He was overjoyed when his father received him with open arms.

These brothers had much the same doubts. They were truly sorry for what they had done. But, they could hope for nothing more than to be received as servants and not as brothers.

GEN 50:19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

Joseph reassured them by telling them that his exalted position did not mean he had the right to refuse their apology for what they had done. He was not the one who could make final decisions with respect to the proper judgment for evil.

GEN 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Interestingly enough, God had overseen all that had been done. His own providential actions had turned what



they had intended to be misery for their brother into a means of protecting Israel from extinction in the famine. His presence in a high place in Egypt had allowed him to feed and care for those who had done him wrong. He certainly would not turn from that path just because Jacob had died.

GEN 50:21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

When evil is repaid with evil, evil is multiplied. When evil is repaid with good, evil is diminished. Jesus taught this principle. Joseph had practiced it centuries before that.

Joseph was happy that he could make his brethren and their loved ones secure in the land of Pharaoh. I must ask the reader if he or she follows in the pathway of Joseph and of Christ, or whether evil is met with retaliation. It is not easy, but it is right!

GEN 50:22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

How interesting it is that no more details are given about Joseph's later life. Joseph was about seventeen when he was sold into Egyptian bondage. He was about fifty-six years of age when his father died. Joseph died at the age of one hundred ten. This means we have very little information concerning him for a period of about fifty-four years. This would be nearly the latter half of his fairly lengthy life.

What is the reason that we have so much about this man during his early years and then so little after Jacob's death? May I venture a guess here? The early part of

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Joseph's life is very critical in the developing plans of God for his people. The latter part is not. The Bible does not spend time on wayside matters. In one moderate sized volume, it presents the creation of man, the fall of man, the preparation for the coming of a Saviour, and the Way back home to God. Other facts are either subheadlines, or are eliminated completely. It would be interesting to know more about the life of Joseph after Jacob's death. It is not necessary to God's plan of redemption.

**GEN 50:23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.**

Joseph lived long enough to see his grandchildren, and perhaps even his great grandchildren. He had the opportunity to watch them develop and dandle them upon his lap. This must have repaid him to some degree for the suffering he endured when he was sold as a slave.

**GEN 50:24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.**

Joseph trusted the promises of God to the extent that even after those many years in Egypt, he was convinced God had not forgotten His precious promise to Abraham. He had promised that he would give the descendants the land of Canaan. He would keep that promise!

**GEN 50:25 And Joseph took an oath of the children**

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of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

Just as Jacob had insisted that he be buried in the cave of Machpelah, Joseph requested that he be buried in the precious promised land. He would not be buried there at the time of his death. However; he was persuaded that the opportunity would come that his remains might be removed and taken back to Canaan. He was not an Egyptian. He was an Israelite.

GEN 50:26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

And so, we have the story of one of the real heroes of the Bible. He lived most of his life as an Egyptian. He died as a child of Abraham.

The entire record of the book of Genesis might well be titled, "From Eden to Egypt." The book of Exodus will tell us the details of how Israel was removed from Egypt and returned to Canaan. How purposeful is the Book of God!

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