



# PT Butler

## Bible Study Notebooks

### Study of Genesis

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

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## GENESIS 1:1---2:4

1. Genesis does not record the beginning of God, because God did not begin! He IS ALWAYS--without beginning or end. Genesis says, "In the beginning, God." It does NOT say, "In the beginning "nothing" for the simple reason that FROM *nothing*, COMES *nothing*! Something IS! *Is-ness* is a fact and must be admitted by all who are not in a lunatic asylum. Romans 1:18-32 makes the logical argument for **Is-ness**! The Bible begins by stating God's existence as the FIRST TRUTH upon which all thinking must start ("For what can be known about God is *plain* to them, because God has *shown* it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been *clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse...*"). We must start the thinking process with **a Something** that is without beginning or end, OR we are driven to the inconceivable postulate *that nothing must have produced something!* If there had ever been a state in which there was nothing, then that state of nothingness would have continued forever. It is impossible for our imagination to grasp *un-begun duration* (i.e., infinite regression). *Cogito, ergo, sum*, ("I think, therefore, I am") wrote Rene Descartes. No person can account for his own thought except on the presupposition that **he**, the thinker exists. No human being can account for his existence (and the rest of all creation) except on the ground of an **Efficient Causality** capable of having brought him (and creation) into existence. So we must logically, sanely, admit the existence of the Uncaused First Cause, the Self-Existent Being, the Necessary Being, as the Ground of all contingent being, or we face infinite regression. And infinite regression back to nothing is a logical impossibility. Valid philosophical (i.e., mental) postulates for the existence of God based upon that which IS, are: Cosmological (i.e., a Causer adequate to explain effects seen); Teleological (i.e., a Designer adequate to explain designs manifested); Ethical (a Moral Being adequate to explain existence of morality); Ontological (beingness); Anthropological (human personality); Aesthetic (beauty); Intuition (religiosity of humanity); Experiential (love, compassion, etc.); Revelational (the Bible---it cannot be from any other source than a God adequate to author it); the **Ultimate postulate** is Jesus Christ, God Incarnated in history!

The cosmos was created *ex nihilo* (i.e., "out of nothing") (see Psa. 104:1-35; 148:1-6; Ex. 20:11; 31:17; Neh. 9:6; 2 Pet. 3:5). "He spoke and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth..." Psa. 33:6-9 Someone (God) was always in existence, and this "something" which we experience (creation and humanity) was made by "the word" of that Someone (God) who owes his existence to no one! In the final analysis, the source and mode of creation, in the absolute sense, is a truth that is to be received by faith; for it transcends both human reason, imagination and observation (no one was there to see from what and how God created the cosmos and humanity). Today some scientists (or those who pretend to be scientists) arrogantly expostulate that they know how matter came to be---- "from atoms!" But what are atoms? Has an atom ever been seen, measured, weighed or analyzed? One of the most plausible theories is that "*an atom is a mathematical point where force is located*" a point around which play unceasingly attractive and repulsive forces. If this is true, that God should call it (atomic energy) into being would not be impossible to believe for it would be analogous to what we know of human mental power---man is also a creator, calling into existence thoughts, choices, and bodily motions. The Hebrew word *bara* is translated "create" and occurs 3 times----in Gen. 1:1,21,26. It designates a *primary* beginning and is to be distinguished from the Hebrew verbs *yatzar* ("formed") and *asah* ("made") which may be used to denote the "secondary makings or creations" of men. The visible universe neither existed from eternity, nor was fashioned out of pre-existing matter, but was **summoned into**

**existence** by an express **command** of God. The same verb, *bara*, is used to affirm the primary beginning of animal life and human spirit! God's **creation** includes all the angels (including the devil and those who rebelled against their assignments with him, 2 Pet. 1:4; Jude 6); it includes all living creatures upon earth; space, time, matter (planets & stars), and energy.

It says "the **earth** was without form and void" (probably means the whole *universe* was formless and void). The Hebrew words *thohu* and *bohu* which means nothing yet visible had been formed. Darkness was upon the deep expanse of space. It is a picture of black, limitless space filled with the "stuff" emerging at God's command with which he will **form** visible planets, stars, matter, and life. The Spirit of God was moving, Hebrew word *merachepeth*, meaning, "brooding, fluttering, hovering, moving." It conveys the idea of a "stirring, or a fluttering" as of an eagle or a dove stirring up their nests as they are hatching their eggs and teaching their young to fly (Deut. 32:11---same word). It is a beautiful word depicting "nestling, trembling with love." Creation was an outpouring of Divine Love as well as of Divine Power. God creating the universe was a transmutation of mental will power into physical power. Man does it all the time when he "makes up his mind to walk, run, climb, jump, etc., and the thought is transmuted into action. "Over the face of the *waters*" means that God was "nestling" over the primordial *substance* of our universe as it existed in a fluid, or *liquid* form, **or** that God's Spirit was "nestling" over the atmospheric waters just prior to the creation of light.

That the light created in Gen. 1:3 was not the light of our sun, is obvious from Gen. 1:14. Most physicists today conclude that the primal form of energy in our universe was some form of *radiating energy*. This first light could have been some form of molecular light, that is, light resulting from the heat produced by the motion induced by the Divine "hovering." There are all kinds "lights" in the form of *energy* or *motion* going on all around us that cannot be seen by the naked human eye (radio waves, TV waves, X-rays, ultra violet rays). Even our present "sun" and "moon" and "stars" are **reflectors** of some **other source of Light**. The Bible does not disagree with what science **knows** today! God also made the darkness. Why? We can only conjecture that he made it for purposes of rest and growth or perhaps to typify the terror of being separated and lost from God who is Light. Whatever the reason, "he saw that it was good."

Modern biological classification goes in descending order from Kingdom to Phylum to Class to Order to Family to Genus to Species. "Each according to its kind" is **exactly what is observed by science today!** No one, I repeat, NO ONE, has ever observed a change from one "kingdom to another (i.e., animal to plant) or from one "phylum" (chordata vs. arthropoda to tracheophyta) to another. In fact no one has ever observed a change from one "family" (i.e., from hominidae {human} to canidae {dog}) to another! When we get to "species," however, there **are** observed changes. There are differences within the "dog family" and the "human family." Some of those differences are "naturally" induced by random mutations, and some may be temporarily induced by hybridization. But all animals and plants left to themselves will reproduce within their species according to a predictable ratio. What the monk Gregor Mendel proved over 100 years ago by cross pollination of sweet peas still holds true today. And that is that there may be many variations of sweet peas within the "species" but a sweet pea will never become a pine tree! **Furthermore**, there has **never** been observed any **transitional forms** between "kingdoms" or "phyla" in the billions of fossils scientists have discovered. And, experiments of "mutating" thousands of generations of fruit flies (Dobshansky) have produced lots of different fruit flies, but **ONLY** fruit flies. "EACH ACCORDING TO ITS KIND..." is both Biblical and scientific. The Bible and science do not

disagree!

No, Genesis is not wrong in stating that God created the universe in 6 days!

a. From a Bible-believer's viewpoint, it should be obvious that if Jesus could speed up the processes of time and/or bring things into immediate existence which never existed before, or bring dead bodies back to life again, God could certainly create our universe in six 24-hour days. He could have created it in ONE 24-hour day or split-second, had he wanted.

b. The universe was created in 6 *regular, 24-hour days*. The Hebrew word *yom*, means "day." It must be interpreted in its contextual, historical and parallel usages. When it is used with a cardinal number it almost always means a 24-hour-day. Moses, writing for people who lived long before modern speculative theories about billions of years would use the commonly accepted 24-hour-day word. If God had meant billions of years of light and billions of years of darkness "divisions" nothing could have lived during those burning and freezing billions of years.

c. The universe had to have been created with an "appearance" of age. The universe, as we know it, came into existence in one week and appeared as if it were ages old. Adam and Eve were created fully-grown in an instant! Logically speaking, anything *created* would, by the very nature of *creation*, necessarily have an appearance of age. *Created* trees would have "age-rings" in their trunks; *created* minerals would be to some degree depleted of carbon 14 and other elements to give an appearance of age. Evolutionists claim the universe is billions of years old. How do they know---no one was there when it came into existence to mark down the date it began! All so-called "dating" processes necessarily involve reference points which are purely speculative and there is **no scientific** way possible to determine an object's original state or the speed of its aging process before the scientist got his hands on it. In fact, there are certain natural processes going on right now which tend to prove the earth is of very young existence. For just one example, meteoritic dust is falling every day on the earth from outer space. Its rate of fall has been measured and is fairly well known. If the earth is 5 billion years old and the meteoritic dust has fallen all that time at the same rate it is today, we could calculate that there should be a layer of such dust 54 ft. Thick over the entire surface of the earth.

d. "The best physical evidence that the earth is young is a dwindling resource evolutionists refuse to admit is dwindling. To admit that it is dwindling (decaying) is tantamount to admitting that the earth is young. To deny that it is dwindling...is phony physics...the dwindling resource is the magnetic energy field of the earth's dipole magnet." ---Dr. Thomas Barnes, Univ. of Texas at El Paso. Dr. Barnes goes on to prove through this process that the earth cannot possibly be more than 8000 years old.

e. The Bible does say, "A thousand years is as a day with the Lord..." etc., but that is "with the Lord." Man does not presently have the mental capacity to think in terms of timelessness. All these "billions of years" are merely **speculative** and there is no hard, scientific, substantive **evidence** to prove them. Certainly when Moses wrote Genesis, he would not have used the Hebrew word *yom* ("day") as a "metaphor" for "billions of years."

What is there in the **living cell** to *vitalize* it (i.e, give it "life")---to differentiate it from mere *quanta* (a unit of energy)? NO ONE KNOWS! The secret resides with God! The most that has been learned thus far is that "life requires a large number of highly specific proteins with different shapes, sizes, and patterns." Men try to *synthesize* living cells in the laboratory. I don't believe it will ever be done! The news media continually *sensationalize* such efforts by

crying, "Life Created by Scientists." BUT LIFE HAS NEVER BEEN CREATED BY HUMAN BEINGS. **IN FACT, IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN SYNTHESIZED BY SCIENTISTS!** Kornberg and his associates did not synthesize life---they did not even synthesize a virus. They *did* synthesize viral DNA. They transferred from a **living cell** to a test tube, the apparatus necessary for synthesis of viral DNA. *But*, they used as their starting material what others claimed they had created; they took viral DNA from a virus-infected living cell and transferred it to a test tube! Proteins cannot reproduce themselves---that is the job of DNA. But DNA has to have assistance from already existing proteins to do its job. SO WHICH CAME FIRST? All that has ever been demonstrated is that man, with the necessary enzymes, bacteria, DNA proteins and living cells **in hand**, can superintend the positioning of nucleotides in order to have these elements recopy (replicate) that which has already been observed!!! The theory of "spontaneous generation of life" is unobserved, unscientific, and absurd! So what or where is life? Man does not know! He must depend on knowledge available to him **ONLY** by divine revelation. God's divine revelation is in the Bible. The Bible says that life is in "blood," "light," "water," etc., but all these are merely *secondary sources*. THE ULTIMATE SOURCE, BEHIND WHICH THERE IS NO OTHER SOURCE OR ORIGIN, IS GOD-THE-WORD! God created *ex nihilo* (i.e., "out of nothing") everything that exists, including human, animal, and plant LIFE. His word is life (John 6:36). By his **word** he created all that exists (Gen. 1:1; 2:7, etc., Heb. 11:3).

Lower animal (and plant) life was made "each after its own kind" but **MAN WAS MADE AFTER THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD!** Man is the apex, the ultimate, of God's creation. Man is made just a "little lower than Elohim" (God) Psa. 8:3-8; Heb. 2:5-9. Man has been given redemption by God, and promised a future sovereignty that even angels long to know about (1 Pet. 1:12). The word "image" (Hebrew *tzelem*) contains the fundamental essence of personhood, individuality, otherness. Each human being is a sovereign "other" than every other human being. Not so with animals and plants. Being an *individual, sovereign* being demands moral capacities and powers which may be exercised only by that **individual**. Animals act from innate instinct (2 Pet. 2:12). Man has the power to act from higher capacities than instinct. **THAT MAKES HIM HIGHER THAN, DIFFERENT THAN, ANIMALS!** No animal is of equal worth to any human being! In fact man was granted dominion over all other forms of life on earth! (Gen. 1:28; Heb. 2:8). **MOST MODERN ANIMAL-RIGHTS PEOPLE ARE SPEAKING CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD!** Animals and plants must not be abused, wasted, or otherwise criminalized. The Law of Moses forbids abuse of animals and commands human beings to treat domesticated animals mercifully and kindly. But the kind of maudlin sentimentality that rants and raves that it is "inhumane murder to kill chickens for human consumption" (the words of an "animal-rights" advocate reported in a recent *World* magazine), but speaks not a word about the aborting of partially born (or all aborting of) babies is an **abomination** thrown in the face of Almighty God!



## GENESIS 2:5-25

Chapter 2 was **not** intended by the writer (Moses) to be **chronological**. Man was not created before plants and animals. Chapter 1 is the chronological order of creation. In 2:4-6 the writer describes creation barren and without vegetation *in order to* make the account of Paradise (Eden) more vividly lush and habitable. Also to show man how dependent he is on his Creator, the writer mentions man's creation and *then* the Garden made for man (but actually, plants and animals were created before man). The emphasis in chapter 2 is **association**, not chronology. In chapter 1 man is pictured as only a part of the *whole* creation. In chapter 2, God reveals that man is, **exclusively**, in his primitive environment and innocence, **the crown of God's handiwork and the object of God's parental love**. THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE CHAPTERS! Check out almost any other book and you will find the same literary method being employed to create emphasis. I've read all the works of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) and he uses it in practically every one of his books (20 in all).

The Hebrew word for "mist" is *aed*. This is the **only place** (Gen. 2:6) in all the Bible this word is found! It definitely does not mean rain. The two most often used Hebrew words for "rain" are *gashem* and *mammarr*. This "mist" was undoubtedly the "waters above the firmament" which was a huge vapor canopy **above** the troposphere (the "troposphere" is the part of our *atmosphere* where clouds form). The Hebrew word for "firmament" is *raqiya* and means "expanse," or "platform." So the "mist" was **above** what we call our "sky." The "mist" was not so thick the sun could not shine through it. This mist was the waters which came upon the earth (in their totality) at the time of the Flood when "the windows of the heavens were opened" since there does not seem to be enough "water" in the atmosphere **below** the troposphere to produce such a universal flood as is mentioned in Genesis 6-9. Dr. Henry Morris, founder of Creation Research Institute, believes there was no rainfall before the Flood (because the rainbow is mentioned as a "new" sign from God to man after the Flood (Gen. 9:11-17). He concludes that the "mist" in Gen. 2:6 was a condensation (a process of evaporation from both land and water surfaces upon the earth) which and fell back upon the earth as a light mist "watering" the plants and animals **before** the Flood. This method of "watering" vegetation and animal and human life would preclude storms, floods, and other catastrophic elements which we now have and which cause much damage and loss of life.

What is unique about man's creation is that God "breathed into man's nostrils the **breaths** (plural) **of life** and man became a living soul." This is not said of any of the rest of God's creation---not even of the animals. We learn from Genesis 1:28 that man was created to "have dominion over...every living thing that moves upon the earth." We learn from Genesis 2:5,15 that man **alone** was created to "till the earth and "keep it." We learn from Genesis 2:16 that man **alone** was created a **moral creature** with commandments from God that he might either keep or disobey. The Bible account of man's creation **above, with dominion over, capacities to "till the earth and keep it," and his moral power** is in exact accord with what we know about man today! Man's "material" part (his body) shares the life of animals; but man's "**spiritual**" part **shares the life that is in God**. The Biblical account of man's existence coincides with every **known** scientific fact today. There are a multitude of **theories** about man's existence which are contrary to the Biblical account of creation BUT THERE ARE **no known scientific facts** which **disagree** with the Biblical account.

Eden was to the **east** (east of the “Wilderness”) of the author’s (Moses’) point of reference. A river flowed out of Eden divided into 4 heads or streams: the Pishon which went around the land of Havilah; the Gihon which flowed around the whole land of Cush; the Hiddekel (or Tigris) which flowed in front of Assyria; and the Euphrates. Two locations have been proposed for Eden: (a) in the mountains of Armenia where the Tigris and Euphrates and several other rivers rise; or, (b) in Mesopotamia (Iraq) where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers *meet* near the head of the Persian Gulf. Archaeologists have found the oldest human civilization in these areas which are within what is known as “The Fertile Crescent.” At the site of **Eridu**, near what was considered to be the ancient shore line of the Persian Gulf, clay tablets have been found which tell of a garden in the neighborhood in which grew a sacred palm tree (see *Archaeology and Bible History*, by Joseph P. Free, 1969, pub. Scripture Press, pp. 29-32). Needless to say, that area today looks nothing like the description of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 1-3. Of course, when man sinned, God **removed** man from Eden and Eden from man! Created in the “image of God” man will **always need something to DO!** Even in his pristine, sinless, status he needed something to DO. Work is creative; work in a sinless world is FUN; work is *dignifying, ennobling, and builds character*. This should indicate to us that God will have some “work” for us to do in heaven. We are told we shall “reign” with him.

No! Man did not need to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil **in order to distinguish between right and wrong!** He need only to know that God had forbidden it to know what was right and what was wrong! And God forbade it *before* Eve and Adam ate of it! Man lives “by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4). Man needs **only** to partake of the “Bread of Life come down out of heaven” to live (John 6:35-63). What kind of tree was this “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?” *That is irrelevant!* There was nothing evil about the tree itself for God made everything “good” in the beginning! IT WAS PARTAKING OF WHAT WAS FORBIDDEN THAT WAS EVIL! The fundamental truth embodied in God’s prohibition of this Tree was that man was **never** to be proud and ambitious and aspire to anything forbidden by God, whether it was forbidden knowledge or forbidden experience. Man was never to seek to experience or know that which God alone knows how to use for the benefit of all his creatures. Basically, Eve and Adam’s sin was pride, rebellion against the place God had put them----under his dominion. The devil tempted them with the **false** promise that they would be as “gods” if they partook (wise as, powerful as, sovereign as their Creator). The devil promised them something that could **never be possible!** And they knew that! Their attempt to hide after they disobeyed betrays them! Deep down in the soul, every human being knows that (Rom. 1:18-32; 2:12-16)! But the devil is so subtle, so “slick,” so devious, so evil with the truth, that human beings who **neglect the revealed word of God**, and count it of no significance, are easily seduced into the very same sin as that of Eve and Adam----they want to be their own “god.”

If we knew what “language” Adam used to name “all living creatures” then we would be able to answer this question precisely. There is a plethora of languages in the world today because God “confused” man’s speech (language) at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11). So “all living creatures” are denominated by “different” names today. Perhaps if we studied the etymology of all the “classifying” words for animals and plants of each language we might discover that **basically**, all living things are described similarly. One thing we do know from this account is that **man had language from the very beginning of his existence**. The gibbon’s (an ape) larynx and all vocal chords are essentially the same as the human’s---BUT GIBBONS DO NOT TALK! Logically (if evolution is true), the most “primitive” people should have the simplest languages. *But the reverse is always the fact!* The most “advanced” cultures have the simplest languages. Language seems to have devolved, if anything!

“There are no ‘primitive’ languages well developed...and there are no human beings without language” (Ency. Britannica, 1960, Vol. 13). Here is what one evolutionist said: “Though I regard the gulf that separates human speech from animal communication as unbridgeable, I do not see any sufficient reason for abandoning the *idea* of a more or less continuous biological evolution.” Prof. G. Revesz, Amsterdam Univ. In his book, *Origins and Pre-history of Language*, p. 3. Yes, “evolution” is an “idea” (i.e., theory), not a fact! And not even a good theory because it cannot explain the “unbridgeable gulf separating human speech from animal communication.” The data about human language today is strikingly parallel to Genesis 11. That is, a **generalized base** of structural system for **all languages**, but a sudden origin of all the differing languages today...none of which can be said to have “evolved.”

The fact that man was capable of communicating in propositional and conceptual language (words, i.e., spoken symbols), while animals were not, made it necessary that a “helper,” adapted to Adam’s needs to communicate be created. Language, and its use is what makes it possible for man to retain his humanness. If man has no one to talk to and listen to, he is less than human. **Man was made to commune!** Someone of the same nature with whom to share (through words) one’s un-actable feelings and thoughts is necessary to the development of one’s potentialities as a human. Man is intimate and sociable by created nature. That is why the regeneration of man necessitated God becoming flesh, in his Son, to communicate in man’s experience and in man’s language (words).

Jesus said “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” (Matt. 19:4-6). Yes, Adam and Eve were married when they lived in Eden---God married them! God would have all men and women understand that marriage is a divinely ordained institution. Marriage (family) is the oldest institution known to humankind, prior to worship, prior to religion, prior to all human government. Adam said, in Hebrew *za’th hapa’am*, which means, “Eureka, wow, at last, finally!” or “THIS IS IT!” Delitzsch says, “The fact that **this** is repeated 3 times in Gen. 2:23 vividly points to the woman on whom, in joyful astonishment, the man’s eye rests with the full power of first love.” This union of one man and one woman was to be perpetuated through monogamy (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Cor. 6:16, etc.). There must be a union of the spiritual essence of man and woman as well as physical to make a marriage permanent.

They had their bodies under control in their spiritual subservience to God and kept them in perfect harmony with God’s will. But when they used their bodies to rebel against God’s commandment (whatever it was) they experienced a shameful degrading, guilt imposing, experience upon themselves. Man without sin is like the innocent baby, not ashamed of his body. Not tempted by it. **Always used within the will of God**, nothing is shameful about the human body.



## GENESIS, 3:1---4:26

Evil (sin) began some place and some time **before Eden**, because the “tempter” came **after** Eden was made. The Bible teaches clearly that sin originated in the free choice of a personal creature (one who was created) who chose to challenge the sovereignty of God. Sin or evil had its beginning in the rebellion of Satan, an angel created by God and other angels who joined him in rebellion (Jn. 8:44; 1 Tim. 3:6; Lk. 10:1-18; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Matt. 25:41; 1 Cor. 6:3; Rev. 20:10). The Bible also teaches that this present life is but the battleground in which God and Satan are engaged in combat for the allegiance of mankind (Eph. 2:1-3; 3:10-12; 6:11-12; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). The Bible also teaches that physical evil (death, catastrophes, injustices, sicknesses, etc.) is the penalty that follows the indulgence of moral evil (Gen. 3:16-19; Exodus 20:5-6; Rom. 1:27; 5:12-14; 8:18-23, etc.). Why would God make it possible for an angel to sin? Well, not even God can love a puppet. If God is to create **persons** he must create them capable of disobedience. Real love must make itself vulnerable to being spurned. All God’s beings (angels and humans) were created innocent (Gen. 1:31; Jude 6). Many angels preserved their original innocence and by unbroken obedience to God attained “holiness” (Psa. 89:7; Mark 8:38; 1 Tim. 5:21). But others **rebelled** against their “first estate” (their subservience to God) and were cast out of heaven (Job 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) to become “wanderers to and fro in the earth.” They were not seduced as humans were but sinned purely of their own volition. For this inexcusable disobedience, and probably other reasons not known to us, God justly decreed them totally depraved and provided no plan for their salvation. Apparently, God’s plan was to permit these rebels to demonstrate their total depravity and in so doing prove themselves fit only for hell. This would vindicate the justice of God before all intelligent creation (angelic and human) in refusing them redemption (1 Cor. 6:3; Rev. 20:1-15).

The Hebrew word *nachash* is “serpent” in Gen. 3:1. Various meanings are given for the word such as, “to hiss,” “to whisper,” “to shine,” “to pierce,” “to move,” and “to creep.” It is explicitly stated that this “serpent” was a “beast of the field.” It seems reasonable that Satan would **use** (if allowed) some well-known, and what appeared to be in Eden, harmless “agent” to conceal his malevolent, spiteful, wicked, depraved identity. Before the fall of humankind serpents apparently moved about without “slinking” or crawling on the ground (Gen. 3:14). Even now, Satan is permitted to present himself to people in the guise of an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). Whatever the “*nachash*” was, it was a real being for the curse God pronounced upon it would be meaningless if it was only a figure of speech or myth. Paul says it was an *Ophiophis*, “serpent” that beguiled Eve (Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 11:3). In Revelation the devil is called, “the great dragon...ancient serpent...the Devil...Satan, the deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). If the “serpent” was a “beast of the field” it would not have had the capacity to communicate with words, so the devil must have been permitted by God to “possess” the serpent to use it as his agency by which to mesmerize Eve and then speak to her. Someone has written, “The *serpent itself* is the best comment on the text--Look at it, glittering, lithe, cunning, cold, smooth, poisonous. Truly it looks like it might have done it! The most subtle beast of the field, it exerts a fascinating influence on its victims, hypnotizing them with its eye, stealing upon them by noiseless, low, unseen approach, it out-climbs the monkey, out-swims the fish, out-leaps the zebra, out-wrestles the athlete. To a child, there are few things more attractive than a glittering serpent.”

God, in his secret wisdom (Deut. 29:29), permits many exigencies or circumstances in this world for his purposes in producing a creature (human being) that will love him and obey him

out of love. In order to produce such a being, God has to allow that being to actually and really experience the “tug” to choose both good and evil (Matt. 18:7; 2 Cor. 1:8-11). In allowing such a circumstance God supplies humans with **more-than-sufficient** information and **causation** to love him and obey him. Evil is not allowed to be overwhelming (1 Cor. 10:13), nor does God overwhelm humans and force them to obey him. **God makes himself vulnerable to being spurned!** THAT’S AN AWESOME TRUTH! God, therefore, is able to use any part or person of his creation for the good of human beings (Rom. 8:28). He speaks to man through a donkey; he controls the oceans and rivers and storms to do his bidding.

He selected the woman---the “weaker sex,” more dependent, more trusting---man is easier reached through woman.

Came when she was alone, near enough the tree to see it, did not introduce himself or his goal.

Deliberately altered the divine commandment, misquoted God as if God prohibited eating from **all** trees.

Emphasized God’s restrictions, but never mentioned all the freedom God had given them.

Seduced her into adding “neither shall you touch it” to God’s command.

Lied to her that there would be great advantage to be gained from eating the fruit (didn’t mention disobedience).

Cast doubt on God’s veracity.

Cast doubt on God’s motives.

Seduced Eve into a false sense of security--- “thou shalt not surely die” (the strongest power evil has in the world even today is the widespread lie that there is no “death” and no “hell” no future punishment for unforgiven sin).

His final and strongest appeal was “You shall be as gods”---free from all restraints, having the power of your life in your own hands, you will be an “autonomous self” living your life as you please.

Matthew Henry has said, “The garrison that seeks to parley is not far from being surrendered.” Eve “contemplated” (the Hebrew word *ra’ah*, means “consider, contemplate, obtain insight” cf. Eccl. 2:12; 3:13; 5:18). Eve’s “sight” of the forbidden fruit was not just a fleeting glance. She “considered” it good for food, delightful to look upon, and desirable to make one wise. There was the physical, the esthetic or emotional, and the intellectual appeal (cf. 1 John 2:15) to indulge herself in disobeying God. So, she “took” of the fruit and ate. She was not forced to do so either by God or the devil! No human being ever is “forced” to sin. She made up her own mind to do it and did it! Sin is unequivocally defined by John as **self-willed lawlessness** (1 Jn. 3:4). Then she gave some to her husband, and he ate. Neither she, nor the devil, nor God forced Adam to eat. Eve was willing to be seduced by the devil---but Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. There was no seduction of Adam (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22). The result for both was **SHAME, GUILT, FEAR**. God ordered creation so that should human beings sin, they would immediately have a *conscience*. In the state of perfect

innocence there would be no *conscience*. The effect of *conscience* is to condemn, expose, judge, create fear. Now they are spiritually naked, aware of rebellion and of being estranged from God. They are aware they had been deceived, humiliated themselves and lowered themselves from what they ought to be. Satan had deceitfully promised them they would be **higher** than they were---when in reality, they became **lower** than they had been created---they gave in to the “law of the flesh” (Paul calls it in Romans 7-8). Like animals, they let the flesh control them rather than them controlling the flesh---like children of God. They covered their organs of generation, instinctively feeling that the very fountain and source of human life is contaminated by sin. Then they tried to **hide** themselves from God’s omniscience. What a losing game that was! God’s questions indicates he knows everything that has gone on. He is questioning man to give his judgments more impact on their souls.

Adam responds by blaming God for being one who was to be feared (remind you of the Parable of the Pounds Lk. 19:20-27?). Adam’s second response was to blame God for giving him the woman who was to blame for his sin. Eve blamed the serpent (“the devil made me do it”). No admission of guilt; no contrition; only **evasion and falsehoods**. And the whole human race has followed in their footsteps (Rom. 3:23). Human beings will do most any underhanded thing to avoid saying, like the Prodigal Son, “**I have disobeyed God’s law!**” Yet, this is the first step necessary to being **reconciled** to a holy and loving God and to other human beings.

Yes! It was right for God to curse the serpent (the devil) because the devil was created a moral being and he became at his very beginning (John 8:44-47), of his own choice, an immoral being---and has continued to be. Don’t forget that God also cursed Adam and Eve and all their descendants who disobey God as they did (Rom. 8:18-25). And that, of course, includes every human being except the Perfect Human Being (and Son of God), Jesus Christ. The devil’s future is to be a prisoner of hell forever (in torments) along with all who refuse, like him, to **repent** about their attitude of **lawlessness** and, in faith, throw themselves upon the vicarious (substitutionary) atonement of Jesus Christ for their sins, obeying his commandment to be immersed in water in order to enter into the covenant of grace.

Because Abel offered his sacrifice “by faith” (Heb. 11:4), i.e., in obedience to what God told him to offer. Cain’s sacrifice was **contrary** to what God had commanded (animal sacrifice). “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness...” (Heb. 9:22). God clearly **told** both Abel and Cain because one must “hear” the word of God in order to have faith in it (Rom. 10:17). Abel is designated as one of God’s “prophets” (Matt. 23:29-35; Lk. 11:48-51)---he had the word of God. It wasn’t that Cain’s occupation (a tiller of the soil) was wrong, but **his offering was wrong**.

Yes! We are all “our brother’s keepers.” Remember the contrast between the Good Samaritan and the elder son of the parable of the Prodigal. See also Rom. 12:9-21; 15:1-13; Gal. 6:10; 1 Jn. 3:14-18; 3:23; 4:7-12; 4:20-21; 5:1-2). God gave Cain a “sign” (Heb. *’oth*) **not a “mark.”** God’s “sign” was that none would murder him. What the “sign” was, we are not told. Whatever it was, it was widely known (Gen. 4:24).

Dr. Henry Morris estimates, in *The Genesis Record*, p. 143, that by the first 800 years (the lifetime of Cain) the human race had reproduced to 120,000 or more; that by the time of the Flood the world population would have been at least 7 billion people. In order to get this all started, at least one of Adam’s sons had to marry one of Adam’s daughters. Probably in that first generation, all marriages were brother/sister marriages. Morris says, “In that early time, there were no mutant genes (no hard radiation from the sun while the “great mist” watered the

earth) in the genetic systems of any of these children, so that no genetic harm could have resulted from close marriages. Many generations later (after the Flood), in Moses day, such mutations had accumulated to the point where such unions were genetically dangers, so that incest was thenceforth prohibited by God..." WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE? HE MARRIED HIS SISTER! Some of Cain's descendants are noteworthy: **Lamech**---led the entire Cainite family into open rebellion against God---beginning with polygamy or bigamy, against God's original commandment for monogamy (Matt. 19:3-10). He also composed a blasphemous poem defying God's principle of the sanctity of human life and boasted how he had murdered another human being; next is **Jabal** (means "wanderer") who invented the tent. He was a herdsman, raising animals for his occupation; then **Jubal** (means "sound") who was an "artist" and loved the aesthetic rather than the commercial--he invented musical instruments; then **Tubal-cain** (means "fire or forger") who invented tools and weapons from metal. Notice how quickly all this came about, *contrary* to the evolutionary theory that it took hominids (ape-men) millions of years to get a language, learn about fire and make tools. Man's attempt to overcome the effects of God's curse is illustrated by the Cainitic line: (a) city life was preferred to tilling the ground; (b) wandering life was preferred instead of settled agricultural life; (c) cattle raising had been started probably because men had become meat-eaters instead of plant-eaters; (d) tools and weapons were developed to ease the toil and slay other men; (e) musical instruments were devised to ease the sorrows of humanity; (f) polygamy was introduced instead of monogamy; (g) poetic boasting asserted man's independence from God. The wickedness of man was great in the earth (Gen. 6:5). They walked in the way of Cain (Jude 11) and were indulgent, rebellious, uncontrolled anarchists. It was after the Flood that God formally instituted systems of human justice to control wicked human beings (Gen. 9:6).

## GENESIS 5:1---7:24

The Hebrew language uses the word *sepher* (5:1) which may only be translated “book” (not “message or lore or word-of-mouth). This assures us that the record of the book of Genesis *before the Flood* was **all written records---not oral**. It certainly is possible that Adam himself **wrote** Genesis, chapters 2,3, & 4. Since Noah’s life overlapped that of Enosh, grandson of Adam and son of Seth, Noah would have had access to “the **book** of the generations of Adam,” and either preserved the original, or copied it, **and Noah (or one of his sons) added** Genesis, chapters 5 through 9. Noah’s life overlapped that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and what Adam **wrote** and Noah **wrote** was undoubtedly preserved and passed from one generation to another until it came down to Moses. There is no reason at all to doubt that we have an **eyewitness** account of what occurred in Genesis from Adam to Moses! Of course, the information about creation would have been **revealed** to Adam by God, since Adam wasn’t present until he was created!

Enoch was a “prophet of God” (Jude 14) and “walked with God.” He must have been an exceptionally holy man in the midst of a perverse society. Probably, God wanted to reward Enoch for his righteousness and faithfulness, so Enoch was allowed to escape physical death as we know it. But most importantly God **demonstrated** to those wicked *pre-diluvians*, through an event (Enoch’s “taking”) unique in all pre-Christian history (except Elijah’s “taking”), that **life continues beyond this present existence!** God was warning all the pre-Christian generations that all human beings would face judgment *beyond* life on earth.

Methuselah was born when Enoch was 65 years old (5:21). This proves that the ages of the patriarchs were measured in **years** not months---“months” would make Enoch only 5 years old when his son was born! Methuselah was the oldest of the 10 patriarchs, 969 years old. **His** life overlapped that of **Adam** by 243 years, and that of Shem by 98 years. Thus was formed a **first-hand connecting link with Adam and the Garden of Eden and the post-flood world!** This formed another link between Noah and Adam because Methuselah’s life overlapped both Adam and Noah! Long physical life was made possible, as we’ve stated before, through the “great mist” (before the Flood) filtering out much more of the gamma and ultra-violet rays from the sun than our present post-diluvian atmosphere does.

There are three “theories” about “the sons of God marrying daughters of men.” (a) “Sons of God were fallen angels who took the sinful women-descendants of Cain as wives and produced children who were giants; (b) “Sons of gods” (and the word *elohim* here is plural, “gods”) were judges and princes among men who **should** have been maintaining justice and order but instead “took wife such of them as they chose,” *committed adultery violently*, and became profligates allowing society to degenerate to the extremes mentioned; and (c) “Sons of God” were sons of the line of Seth, marrying, or taking in adultery, daughters of the line of Cain. There is no statement or case in all the Bible that there can be intermarriage between angels and human beings. Jude 6 and 2 Pet. 2:4 contain no references to Genesis 6:1-3. That angels may have physical sexual relations is **contrary** to the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 22:30). The Hebrew language does not possess a word for “goddess”---the whole concept of sexual life connected with angels is absolutely foreign to Hebrew thought. “Sons of God” is a common designation of the Chosen People---worshippers of the true God (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; 32:5-19; Hosea 1:10; 11:1; Isa. 43:6; 45:11; Jer. 31:20; 2 Cor. 6:18). Worshipers of false gods are spoken of as “daughters” and “sons” of those “gods” (Num. 21:29; Mal.2:11). The degeneracy of the line of Seth is stated here to explain why the whole race of man with the



exception of a single family should be doomed to destruction. The sentence of 6:3 is passed on **man** because he has become “flesh,” i.e, worldly-minded and has renounced his spiritual relationship to the Creator. This has nothing to do with angels. If supernatural beings (angels) wanted to take women as wives, women would not be able to resist and the women should not be held accountable. No sentence or penalty is pronounced upon angels here! Fallen angels have no possibility of salvation, but fallen **human beings** do have at least this possibility. What would be the case with people who were half-angel and half-human? I believe (c) is the right idea. Seth’s descendants (except for the family of Noah) became so ungodly they were all destroyed (except Noah’s family) in the Flood.

The Hebrew word *Nephilim* literally means, “those who fall” and was translated, *Giants*. It does not need to be translated “giants” to fit the context here, or in the only other place it is used in the Bible (Num. 13:33). These *nephilim* were not superhuman offspring of angels and humans because 6:4 indicates they were on the earth **before** the “sons of God came in to the daughters of men...” Some Greek versions of the OT (not the LXX) translate the word “violent men.” The *nephilim* reported by the spies of Num. 13:33 could hardly be descendants of those of Gen. 6:4 since these ancient ones were all wiped out by the Flood---unless the genetic-pool to produce physical giants was recessively present in Noah and his children. There does seem to be historical, geological and biological evidence that “giant” human beings have appeared at various times. The Paluxey River bed (where Wilbur Fields has been many times) has rock-fossil imprints of gigantic human footprints alongside footprints of dinosaurs. Bible history (and secular history) mentions giant men like Goliath about 10 ft. tall. And biology-scientists have experimented with genetic mutations which produce gigantism in both plants and animals. **However**, the qualifying phrase of 6:4 seems to indicate the *nephilim* were giants not so much in physique as in popularity or reputation. The Hebrew word *gibborim* translated “mighty men” in RSV, KJV & ASV may be translated, “heroes” and the Hebrew words *aneshey hashem* is literally “the men of name” and translated “men of renown.” Notice it says they were “men of *old*.” Cain may have been the first, and his powerful and arrogant descendant, Lamech, was probably another---men with reputations for violence, arrogance and power who became “princes” or leaders of clans. The Hebrew spies, centuries later, found such arrogance and violence among the Canaanites, and came back exaggerating their own powerlessness. It has always been true of the world’s history that men of violent arrogance are the men of renown---they exert their leadership through *fear*.

There was nothing accidental in the wickedness of that civilization. It was premeditated, harbored, nursed along, relished and gloried in. *Every thought or idea fashioned in the mind of almost every man was only evil all day and every day!* They were totally occupied in thinking up evil and rebellious things to do! God **repented** (Hebrew *nacham*) that he had made man. God does **not** change his mind or his will as man does (see Num 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Joel 2:13-14; Malachi 3:6). But the *only* word man has to express in his own language the **feeling** of sorrow God had about having made man and, that he was going to *change these circumstances*, was *nacham* (translated, “repent”). God expresses his will toward man by revelation. His will is immutable. God blesses faith and repentance in believing people and he chastens and eventually judges evil people. When people conform to God’s will, God acts toward them according to his unchangeable will (it only *appears* to men that God has “changed his mind”). God is consistent with his **immutability** in that he changes his **actions** toward men according to **their changed actions toward him**. God never “hates” people. He is not willing that any should perish. A rebel away from God, unwilling to surrender his rebellion, would be a rebel in the presence of God. Therefore it is the rebel who has separated himself from God by his own hatred. That is what the parable of the Prodigal tells us. God “wiped” (Hebrew *machah*) out the wickedness like one wipes a dish clean. All

animals, birds and reptiles perished, along with all human beings, **except those in the ark**. Without a civilization of people, there would be no need for a dense animal population.

God **always** offers his **grace** through **covenant arrangements**. There was “grace” shown to Adam and Eve by God from the very moment of their creation, but it was through the “covenant of Eden.” Even in the pristine innocence of Eden there were **terms or commandments** laid down by the *Creator* through which the *creature* might enter into and enjoy that “grace.” We may rest assured that the “grace” which Noah “found” was through his faith in God and obedience to the **terms or commandments** which God had laid down to all people after Adam and Eve had sinned in Eden. Undoubtedly a part of God’s **covenant** system for that time was *animal sacrifice*. That is how Abel “found grace” in the eyes of the Lord and Cain did not! Noah was “righteous” and “blameless.” He “walked with God, took heed to God’s warnings, believed God, was a preacher of righteousness, and obeyed God” (see Gen. 6:9,22; 7:1,5,9; Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5) and all of this in the midst of great temptation and opposition from all his civilization. This is the man God had to have to save mankind and the rest of creation. No wonder that Noah is held up by God in the Bible as an example of the faith that saves (Ezek. 14:14,20; Matt. 24:37; Luke 17:26; Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5). All who wish to “find” God’s “grace” today must find it the same way Noah did---by faith and obedience to God’s commandments in the **new covenant, communicated to us through the New Testament scriptures**.

That was no “little” ark! Using the most conservative estimate of a “cubit” (17.5 inches) the ark would measure 438 ft. long X 71.9 ft. wide X 43.8 ft. high (four stories). It was a giant “box” which would be hydrodynamically stable (nearly impossible to capsize). Even in a sea of gigantic waves, the ark could be tilted to any angle just short of 90 degrees and it would immediately right itself. It would also tend to align itself with the direction of major wave advance and thus be subject to only minimal pitching (keeping Mrs. Noah and the sons & daughters-in-law from getting sea-sick). Total volumetric capacity would be approximately 1million, 400 thousand cubic feet. That is equal to 522 standard railway cattle cars, a total of 125,000 sheep (the average-sized-animal is **less** than a sheep) could be transported in the ark. Of course, many animals that needed to be saved in the ark would be *much smaller* than sheep while fewer would be larger---there was plenty of room for two of each **kind**---as we have defined “kind” in Genesis 1. Contained in each *phyla* would be a genetic-pool sufficient to produce the *multitude* of *different species* we have in the world today.

Yes! The Flood was a **world-wide** cataclysm. The Hebrew word *mabbul* is used in Gen. 7--9 and only one other place in the OT (Psa. 29:10) so it is an *exclusive* word, excluding all other “floods” except this world-wide one. The Greek word used in the NT to refer to Noah’s Flood is *kataklusmos*, from which we get the English word **cataclysm** but there are other Greek words depicting localized floods. Genesis is speaking of more than a mere local flood like the Mississippi, etc. God stated he would “blot out from the face of the ground” **every living thing that he had made!** (Gen. 7:4). “All the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered” with the Flood (Gen. 7:19). Dr. Henry Morris, in his book *The Genesis Record*, lists **100 Biblical AND scientific reasons** for believing the Flood was world-wide. There is a world-wide distribution of Flood “traditions” among ancient civilizations---from Polynesia, to Mexico, to ancient Babylon and European civilizations. The fossil remains which are found by archaeologists, paleontologists, and geologists **clearly** indicate a sudden, world-wide catastrophe, capable of leaving on the tops of very high mountains fossils of organisms normally found on the bottom of the sea, etc. The eruption of Mt. St. Helens in Washington state, 1980s, showed that erosions like the Grand Canyon could be made **quickly** by great catastrophes, and would not take “millions of years” to be formed.

No! The story of Noah is not a myth. There is plenty of **scientific** evidence for any honest person to use reason and conclude that a world-wide catastrophe occurred in the distant past. The problem is not a lack of evidence, but a lack of honesty. The apostle Peter wrote that “scoffers” would say there has been a “uniformitarian” system of evolution which has caused all the catastrophic things we see today. In other words, the world has operated in a **closed**, evolutionary mode ever since the world came into existence (through the “Big Bang”). There have been no **miracles** like the Flood, etc. But Peter says, “**they deliberately ignore this fact**, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was **deluged** (flooded) with water and **perished**.” 2 Pet. 3:3-7. DELIBERATELY IGNORING THE FACTS OF SCIENCE, one has only the alternative of some cockamamey evolutionary theory to try to explain our universe as it now is! The apostle Paul wrote that those who deny the existence of an all-powerful, eternal, divine God as the Creator of what is plainly seen, ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE! Such people **deliberately** “exchange the truth of God for a lie....they refuse to acknowledge God” Rom. 1:18-32. FURTHERMORE, if the story of Noah is a myth, then so is the story of Jesus Christ, and the apostles---they all believed the account of Noah and the Flood to be REAL HISTORY! To say that Jesus Christ and Paul and Peter and John were all liars is beyond reason.

**GENESIS 8:1--9:29**

Noah and family were in the ark for 371 days and nights. For 314 days Noah could not see what the flood had done. Flood waters continued to **rise** for 150 days until they were over the highest mountains by 30 or 40 feet. After 150 days the waters began to recede and 40 days later the ark touched bottom on the top of high mountains (Ararat). For 34 more days the waters receded. Earlier, at the beginning of the Flood, the “breaking up of the great deep” (cataclysmic earthquakes, volcanoes, and openings of the earth) formed gigantic valleys (i.e., the Grand Canyon, etc.). The “breaking up” also caused separation of land masses into continents, huge mountains where there were no mountains before, etc. etc. (compare the Mt. St. Helen’s volcanic eruption). Noah waits 40 more days and finally opens the window and sends out a raven. He waits 7 days. IT DOES NOT RETURN. The raven, *a scavenger bird*, with no qualms about resting on debris and eating rotten flesh, stayed when Noah sent it out. Noah sends out a dove and it returns almost immediately. He sends out another dove and waits another 7 days and it returns with an olive branch indicating there is no dry ground yet. He sends out another dove and waits 7 days and the dove does not return indicating finally that there is dry ground upon which Noah may set his foot. But Noah waits yet another 29 days, opens the single “hatch” (door), looks all around, sees no water, but waits 57 more days. Finally, **God opens the hatch** and says, “Go forth.”

With the “mist canopy” gone (the “windows of heaven” opened up and poured out during the flood) the sun could shine down with greater heat and great temperature variations would **evaporate** vast quantities of the water. Some of the flood’s waters would freeze at the polar points. The cataclysmic rearrangement of the earth’s topography would raise continental land masses and thus form huge **ocean** basins to receive the water running off into them in catastrophic proportions (**see Psa. 104:6-9** the first 5 verses of this Psalm refer to creation but obviously, v. 6-9 refer to the Flood). Vast interior continental **lakes** (and thousands of smaller ones) were formed by the upheaval of the earth’s crust during the Flood--they would receive lots of water. Incidentally, all over the world, interior lakes and seas show evidence of much higher water levels in the *recent* past. Rivers also show that they once carried much greater quantities of water and sediment than they do at present. TRY TO IMAGINE THE SCENE NOAH SAW WHEN HE EMERGED FROM THE ARK and how he must have felt as he contrasted it with what he had known before!!! Oceans much larger, land masses much smaller, strong temperature differentials, storms, winds, rains and snows. Collapse of subterranean caverns (“great deeps”), and crust uplifts made the crust of the earth generally unstable and volcanic and seismic activity **rearranged** everything Noah would have known before. Land mass after the flood shrunk to 1/3 of the earth’s surface. Isaiah knew that fact 2700 years ago (Isa. 40:12--the Hebrew word translated “measure” means literally, “one-third”).

God is **emphasizing** that once human beings opened up their minds and hearts to the devil in Eden, **all** succeeding human beings (except the One, his Son, he was preparing even then to send to live perfectly) would hopelessly surrender early in their lives (“from his youth”) to the devil’s seductive temptations. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9). God knows that is the reality and he wants man to **remember** that is the reality. **It well behooves those who profess faith in God and Christ today to keep reminding a sin-sated society that wickedness in the human psyche is a REALITY and that God’s only revealed remedy for it is the gracious atoning death of Jesus Christ.** God knows he cannot correct human wickedness by another world-

wide Flood, so he determines to correct it through ATONEMENT--- “Life for life.” Very patiently and with great longsuffering, God begins to bring human beings to accept that idea of substitutionary atonement through animal sacrifice, which prefigures the ULTIMATE SACRIFICE, God’s perfect human Son. Cataclysms do not bring man to the point of repentance God seeks from him (cf. Rev. 9:20-21; 16:10-11)---ONLY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST WILL DO THAT!

Do you remember this editorial, by Edwin Feulner, president of The Heritage Foundation, in the Joplin Globe of December 15, 1998: “Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses.”---stated by Ingrid Newkirk, founder of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). And, “...animal-rights advocate Dr. Jerry Vlasak, writing about a man whose five-year-old boy had open-heart surgery, says the boy’s life is ‘no more or less important than any other animal’s life, no matter how much (the father’s) emotions tell him otherwise.’” THIS IS SCARY FOLKS! (see also 1 Tim. 4:4-5; Col. 2:16-17). The most “rad” (“cool” for those who don’t know what “rad” means) thing now, according to the Matt Drudge report on the inter-net, is a bunch of kooks in California who are insisting that human beings should eat everything “raw.” And, unlike the PETA group, that includes raw hamburger, raw lamb, raw vegetables---EVERYTHING! There is **NO** Biblical sanction against the eating of animal-meat---but there **IS** sanction against eating it “raw” (with the blood in it Lev. 17:10-16; Acts 15:19-20). Genesis 9:3 says, “**Every** moving thing that **lives** shall be **food** for you (Noah and his descendants---all of which you and I are); and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.” Now, of course, 9:1-2 indicates God was **not** sanctioning the eating of human flesh! In fact, God continues by outlawing the taking of human life. Whatever would save human life is approved by God for **in the very following context God puts the SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE AT THE TOP OF THE ETHICAL HIERARCHY OF WHAT IS RIGHT!**

The flesh of animals was given for food, **but the LIFE (“blood”) of the flesh was given for sacrifice** (Lev. 17:11). Blood conveys the necessary chemicals from the air and from food to sustain and renew the physical flesh, and particularly to maintain the consciousness and the ordinary thought processes of the brain. The “life” (blood) of an animal was desired by God in **substitution** for the life of a guilty sinful human being, until the **perfect human “life”** could be spilled to accomplish the complete sacrifice. So God made sanction against desecrating the “**blood**” because it was the “life.”

**It is significant that the third edict given Noah from God demands the execution of murderers by the whole human race!!!** Human blood is even more sacred than that of animals, because **man is made in the image of God**. Whoever sheds human blood, be it either beast or another human, God **demands** justice, divine satisfaction. Pope John Paul (who said in St. Louis, Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> 1999, that “capital punishment is cruel”) needs to read his Bible---the “Catholic” Bible reads just like the “Protestant” Bible in Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12; Rom. 13:1-7! If a human kills another human, willfully and murderously, then that murderer must be put to death “by every man’s brother” (i.e., the rest of the human race). “Every man’s brother” means that **all human beings** are responsible to see that **justice** is executed, because all human beings are “brothers” and must stand together to form a “brotherhood” of government to protect the sanctity of human life! See Exodus 21:12-17. God  **curses** a land or nation that does **not** execute murderers! A **curse** is upon the nation where innocent blood is shed and not punished. The captivity of the Jews was partly because of innocent bloodshed (2 Kings 24:3-4). It is significant that the New Testament repeats the same three commandments: (a) eating of meat (1 Tim. 4:4) is permitted; (b) abstinence from blood (Acts 15:19-20); (c) authority of human governments to take up the “sword” (execution) against murderers (Rom.



13:1-4; Acts 25:11; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). These were not merely Jewish ceremonial laws. They were integral components in God's re-consecration of the whole human race! CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR CAPITAL CRIME IS NOT DEBATABLE BY CHRISTIANS! GOD SAID IT, WE BELIEVE IT! Furthermore, conscientious objection to bearing arms in just wars---wars against aggression, against tyranny and enslavement of human beings---is **contrary** to God's word. This is precisely what policemen, judges, etc., do on a local scale----they go to **war** against aggressive, anarchic, tyrannical behavior of criminals! The essence of the nature of God is **law and order**.

**Notice, please, GOD does the "establishing" of his "covenant of life" with humans.** Gen. 9:9,11,12,13,14,15,16,17 Humans have no "say-so" in it! God does not even invite their comments on his actions, let alone share the "establishing" of it! God "establishes" it---humans may accept it or not! This is the second time the Hebrew word *Berith* ("covenant") is used. It is used earlier in 6:18 where God promises to make it just before the Flood. God's "covenant" is established with "every living creature." Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood. The "rainbow" becomes a **perpetual sign** to confirm God's promise of no more universal floods. The "rainbow" appears again in Scripture (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3; 10:1) and in each case it is to *symbolize* the **faithfulness of God to keep his promises**. However, God has **promised** that he will destroy this planet earth, totally and completely, some day (even the "elements" will be "dissolved" 2 Pet. 3:10-11). But there will be **no signs** ahead of time as to when that will take place. The faithful preaching of the New Testament is the **only warning** the world shall have of the **final and complete destruction of this planet**. We should not fret about the prophets of "doom" predicting that man himself will **almost** destroy all human life with nuclear bombs, germ warfare, pollution of the environment, etc.,---it ain't gonna happen! In spite of the fact that nearly 200,000,000 people died as a result of WWII, the earth's population stands at over 5,000,000,000 and is growing!

We need to be more concerned about saving sinners with the Gospel because billions of sinners in every generation are going to a Christ-less hell!

Noah and his family, having lived in the anti-diluvian society, had been exposed to the temptation to all kinds of wickedness. They couldn't help being tempted, and apparently overcame most of it. But two of Noah's sons fall into sin. Noah, himself, became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. Sin "crouches" at every man's door. The old patriarch lets down his guard. Ham "saw" the nakedness of his father. Some linguists say the Hebrew word *raah* "to see" means to gaze at with desire for indulgence. Like Eve "saw" the fruit! And, when one considers this incident in the light of the sentence, "When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had **done** to him," it appears Ham may have engaged in some kind of incestuous, homosexual act upon his sleeping father! Noah cursed Ham's generations (9:25-27) in Ham's son, Canaan. The Law of Moses (Lev. 18:6-30) commands that no one "uncover the nakedness" of relatives. In Lev. 18 "uncovering" is clearly connected with illicit sexual intercourse. Some think Ham's sin was "uncovering" his father's nakedness as an action of mockery, disrespect and insensitivity. We note Ham's brothers modestly "walked backwards" and covered Noah with a garment, protecting their father's honor. My inclination, because of Lev. 18, is to believe Ham engaged in, or at least desired, some illicit sexual action upon his father.

The phrase, "...a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers..." cannot mean *slavery* as we think of it today. Hamitic peoples have experienced no more slavery than non-Hamitic peoples through the centuries. Shem's descendants were, generally, Jews, Arabs, Syrians, Assyrians, neo-Babylonians, Persians, etc. Japheth's descendants were, generally, Indo-

Europeans. Ham's descendants were Egyptians, Phoenicians, Hittites, Canaanites, modern African tribes and the Mongol tribes (Chinese and Japanese), American Indians and South-Seas Islanders. Noah's "curse" is most probably fulfilled in that **Ham's** descendants **served** the descendants of the two other brothers by **physically** exploring and settling practically all parts of the world following the dispersion at Babel; were cultivators of most of the basic food staples of the world; first to domesticate animals; developed most of the basic types of structural forms and building tools and materials; first to develop most of the usual fabrics for clothing; discovered and invented wide variety of medicines and surgical practices and instruments; invented most of the concepts of basic practical mathematics, surveying and navigation; developed the machinery of commerce and trade (money, banks, postal systems, etc.); developed paper, ink, block printing, movable type, and other details of writing and communication. Trace back far enough and it will be found that practically every other basic device or system needed for human physical sustenance or convenience **originated with one of the Hamitic peoples!** Shem's descendants "served" mankind by perpetuating the **truth about Jehovah-God.** Japheth's descendants "served" mankind through **intellectualism** (e.g. Greek philosophy and science, Roman law). This is the **general** fulfillment of Noah's prophecy---there are exceptions to it in all the races of mankind.

## GENESIS 10:1---11:32

The data we have in Genesis ch. 10 & 11 is a “proleptic” account---the chronological order is *reversed* for the sake of emphasis on *purpose and meaning*, rather than order of time. Newspaper articles do this every day. It does not detract from the historical accuracy of the data at all! The territories of **Japheth** (Ayrans) lie chiefly on the coasts of the Mediterranean, in Europe and Asia Minor (Turkey) (i.e. “The isles of the Gentiles”). The Scandinavians and Germanic peoples apparently came from Japheth (which includes the “English”). But they also reach across Armenia and along the n.e. edge of the Tigris and Euphrates valley over Media and Persian (Iran). Japheth’s descendants spread westward and northward over Europe, and India, embracing the great Indo-European family of languages. “Japheth” means, “enlarged” and his descendants form the **largest** number of the three brothers. The territories of **Ham** are chiefly in Africa, but they are also found mingled with the Semitic (Jews & Arabs today) races on the shores of Arabia, and on the Tigris and Euphrates, while on the north they extended into Palestine, Asia Minor, and the larger islands (Crete & Cyprus). The Bible mentions a people of the far East named *Sinim* (Isa. 49:12) and they may be the “Sinites” (Gen. 10:17) who migrated *far* to the East and formed the people known as Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Eskimoes, American Indians, Polynesians, Malaysians, etc. The territories of **Shem** were mainly confined to the s.w. corner of Asia (including the peninsula of Arabia)---Elamites, Assyrians (Iraq), Chaldeans (Babylonians--Iraqis), Lydians in Asia Minor and Arameans (Syrians).

Nimrod is given “star-billing” because it appears he was ruler of the people (in the land of Shinar, or “Babel”) who decided they would build a “city with a tower which had its top in the heavens.” (Gen. 11:1-9). These people, under Nimrod, arrogantly decided they wanted “a name for themselves.” The name “Nimrod” means “rebel.” He was a grandson of Ham who had rebelled against God’s moral standards. Nimrod is said to have been “a mighty hunter **in the face of the Lord**” which could mean much the same thing as some often arrogantly say today, “...in your face” in other words, Nimrod was saying to God, “...in your face” by superintending the building of the Tower of Babel. The Jewish *Targum* (a commentary on the OT) says of Nimrod: “He was powerful in hunting and **in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men**, and he said to them, ‘Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!’ Therefore it is said: ‘As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.’” The Hebrew word *gibbor* is translated “mighty” (10:8) and means, “hero.” Nimrod may have been called a “hero” for slaying the gigantic beasts (dinosaurs, etc.) which roamed the earth until becoming extinct. He clearly became master of a “kingdom” of cities (including the ancient cities of Babel {later Babylon} and Nineveh in Assyria).

The “Plain of Shinar” is slightly southeast of Mt. Ararat (where the ark came to rest) in the region later called Mesopotamia (which means “in the middle of the rivers”)---that huge region watered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Since stones were not plentiful there they began a “brick-making” industry with which to build their cities and “towers.” Later, the prophet Jonah, would travel to that territory (Nineveh is just on the northern edge of the plain). Amraphel, one of the “Kings of the East” who kidnaped Lot, was “king of Shinar” (Gen. 14:1). Daniel was taken there as a POW of the Babylonians (Dan. 1:2). Zechariah the prophet used the “land of Shinar” as a symbol of wickedness (Zech. 5:5-11).

The words, “to reach to,” (KJV) are not in the Hebrew text. These ancient Assyrians **did**

attempt to build a tower, literally, “unto heavens.” This may mean only that they decided to build a tower dedicated to the religious worship of the **host of the heavens (i.e., the sun, moon, stars, etc.)**. It may have been a structure on the order of the **ziggurats** found by archaeologists in ancient Babylon and Nineveh. Nimrod and his people do not appear to be such idiots that they thought they could build a tower high enough to go into the far reaches of space. Babylonian worship from its very beginning is characterized by “nature worship,” signs of the zodiac, demon worship, and the occult. Nimrod knew that to institute a “one world” dictatorship for himself, he would need a “one world” religion. Ever since Nimrod, dictators and emperors have tried to follow in his steps (Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, Lenin & Stalin, *etal*). The latest attempt of some to “unite” the human race under one government (although its adherents deny it) is the “United Nations.” Some archaeologists believe they have discovered the ancient Tower of Babel (see Halley’s Bible Handbook under “Babel”).

In no way would **God** fear that any human or aggregation of humans would **ever** conquer heaven! No human beings, not even the Caesars of Rome, have ever conquered the whole of the earth or the whole human population on the earth. God scattered humanity to teach them they were not as powerful (even united under one language) as they thought they were. Human beings have continually believed the devil’s lie that if they persist, if they will only rebel against God’s sovereign control of themselves, they will “be as gods.” Humanity has believed Satan’s lie that they can create their own “Utopia” and accomplish their own “salvation” in their own way instead of God’s way. What the consequences of “one world human government” *might* be (though God will never let it be accomplished) is to be seen in Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome (this is what Daniel teaches). So God simply confounded their languages. He didn’t have to miraculously overpower them and send them flying in every direction---he just made them (in large segments) so they couldn’t understand one another. Max Mueller, comparative philologist said “We have examined all possible forms which language can assume, and we now ask, can we reconcile with these 3 distinct forms...the admission of one common origin of human speech? I answer decidedly (*sic*), Yes!” Otto Jespersen, well-known philologist said: “Some scholars see the insufficiency of the usual theories, and giving up all attempts at explaining it in a natural way fall back on the religious belief that the first language was directly given to the first men by God through a miracle.”

For almost 200 years after the dispersion at Babel almost nothing is revealed about the further history of mankind. Then we are told about Shem’s lineage. **Shem’s** lineage produced the **Semites**. Shem is noted as the “father of all the children of **Eber** (Gen. 10:21). Some scholars think Eber is a shortened form of Hebrew. Be that as it may, when we get to the extended genealogy of Shem (Gen. 11:10-30) we learn that Shem was the ancestral patriarch of the lineage from which Abram (Abraham) descended. That is why the genealogy of Shem’s family is **continued**. God’s **revelation** of the history of mankind is **focused** henceforth on his redemptive program **through this one family**. Of course, the Bible records many other details of world history, **BUT ONLY SUCH HISTORY AS IS RELEVANT TO GOD’S SCHEME OF REDEMPTION IN THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM**. And Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the **Person**, who descended from Shem (Luke 3:36) and Abraham (Matthew 1:2), in whom all the will of God, the promises (testaments) of God culminated (Gal. 3:16). After Genesis 11, the Biblical record will devote itself to revealing to the world how God brought redemption to mankind through the descendants of Shem.

Terah was the father of Abram (Abraham) but he evidently was not among the “Chosen” of God. Terah took Abram, Sarai and Lot and left Ur of Chaldea (Iraq), and went into the land of Canaan (Palestine). We don’t know why Terah moved. Some speculate that God “called”

Terah to do so. Perhaps God used some other method within his providence to prompt Terah to leave Ur (economics, curiosity, persecution). Stephen, in Acts 7:2-3, says God appeared to Abram in Mesopotamia, **before** he went to Haran. Perhaps Abram told his father that God had appeared to him and he was leaving and Terah decided he had best go with Abram. We are not told that God “appeared” to Terah. Terah died in Haran (Acts 7:4), and **then** God said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” Terah worshiped “other gods” (Josh. 24:2,14,15) so he was an **idolater**. It seems strange, at first, to think Abram was a worshiper of the One True God reared in a home that “worshiped other gods.” But we know it happens in lots of families in our world today! Paul talked about just such a situation in 1 Cor. 7:12-16.

Terah was father of at least 3 sons, Nahor, Haran, Abram, and of daughters. Terah was married to **more** than **one** wife, so Abram married his **half-sister**, Sarai (Gen. 20:12). Sarai’s father and Abram’s father was Terah, but Sarai and Abram did not have the same mother. Haran, son of Terah, died when he was about 135 years old and left one son, Lot, who soon became attached to his uncle Abram. Nahor married his niece, Milcah, daughter of his brother Haran. Abram later “used” the fact that Sarai was his “sister” (half-sister) to keep from getting killed by Paraoth (Gen. 12:10-20), and to forego, he hoped, any trouble with Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 20:1-18). Whether this marriage of a half-brother and half-sister was considered to be incestuous on the part of Abram and Sarai or not, we are not told in Scripture. “Marriage is forbidden between any person and a **direct** ancestor or a **direct** descendant or any close relative, such as **brother** or **sister** of either himself or any of his ancestors or any of his immediate descendants.” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 747.*



**GENESIS 12:1---13:18**

Genesis 11:31 states that “Terah **took** Abram his son....and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; **but when they came to Haran, they settled there.**” We do not know exactly why they did not go on to the land of Canaan. There could be many reasons. Evidently, they wanted to **stay** among their “kindred.” (12:1). Haran, the city, may have been named after Haran the son of Terah, so many of Terah’s and Abram’s “kinfolk” lived there. Terah may have been thinking of his old age, the insecurity of going to a distant, unknown, land as a “pilgrim” and wished the security of staying near his settled sons, Haran and Nahor, in his waning years. Abram probably deferred to his father’s wishes as a good son would. Stephen (Acts 7:1f) says **God called** Abram when he was still in “Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran...depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.” Had God already told Abram he was to eventually go to the “land of Canaan?” Clearly, Haran was not the “land” in which God had decided he wanted Abram to finally “settle.” So **God called Abram a second time** (Gen. 12:1f). Gen. 12:5 seems to indicate Abram gained “some possessions and persons” during his temporary stay at Haran. Perhaps God permitted this for his providential reasons. They **repented** of their doubt and God honors **repentance!**

We know that both Abram and Sarai **had doubts** about God fulfilling his promise to make of them a “great nation.” Sarai was so doubtful she gave Abram her servant girl, Hagar, whom Abram might impregnate and produce for himself a male heir (Gen. 16:1-6). And Abram did so! Both Abram and Sarai were guilty of doubting the Lord. Later, we learn that Sarai continued to doubt and “laughed” when the angels repeated God’s promise of a son for Abram by her (Gen. 18:12). After all, Sarai was beyond the age for women to bear children (Gen. 18:11), and Abram was no “spring-chicken” himself. Put yourself in Abram & Sarai’s place. Would you have doubted? So Abram and Sarai needed the **grace** of God extended to them---they were not perfect---even though both of them are held up as paragons of the godly faithful through whom God redeemed the world (Heb. 11:8-19; Rom. 4:1-25; etc.).

Canaan was the son of Ham. **Canaan** was also the progenitor of **all the Canaanites** (Gen. 10:15-20). Canaanites are mentioned on Egyptian inscriptions dating about 1800 B.C. as those people occupying the coast-land of Palestine between Egypt and Asia Minor. **Amorites** were populating much of the land (Palestine) when Abram first “wandered” into the land. The people of **Canaan** must have been **exceedingly wicked** (Gen. 15:16). The Amorite kingdom occupied, at one time, territory all the way from Mesopotamia through Syria with their capital at Haran. Amraphel, king of Shinar, was one of their kings (Gen. 14:1). After several hundred years they were defeated by the Hittites, so they settled throughout a large portion of Palestine. Moses said the Amorites (Canaanites) inhabited the western shore of the Dead Sea (Gen. 14:7), the plain of Mamre (Gen. 14:13), and around Mt. Hermon (Deut. 3:8). **Ashtoreth** was the goddess of the Canaanites; her male consort was **Baal**. The Canaanites practiced human (child) sacrifice, all kinds of sexual perversion, drunkenness and the occult **as their religion**. God “gave” all this territory to Abram (in promise) because the land of Palestine was eminently adapted for the special mission of the Hebrews in the history of the world. It was strategically located (Ezek. 5:5) for commerce, travel, military defense, and its agricultural potential was termed “a land of milk and honey.” None of the great civilizations of the world could communicate with one another **without going through Palestine and thus being exposed to the knowledge of the One True God.**

Abram's motive was to save his own life and perhaps to save Sarai from becoming a concubine of Pharaoh. What Abram told Sarai to do might, I think, may be classified as "the lesser of two evils." It would be a half-truth. Sarai was his step-sister, but she was also his wife. It may be necessary to misrepresent the truth if the loss of life is the only alternative. God places the **sanctity of human life at the top of the hierarchy of ethical expediencies**. That is **not** to say lying is ever completely sanctioned by God! God is Truth (John 14:6). And God's will is that human beings may always be able to tell the truth. In a fallen society, where there are wicked people who will murder, rob, steal, make war, rape, assault, commit perjury, and destroy property, it is sometimes **expedient** to deceive, lie, and mislead such wicked people in order to keep the society from falling into anarchy as in the days before the Flood. It is done by law-enforcement officers all the time; it is done by intelligence experts in war-time. In an **ideal** world (where evil is not existent) lying would not be "necessary." Deception was approved of by God Joshua when he assaulted Ai (Josh. 8:1-17). Rahab deceived her own countrymen about the Israelite spies, and she is held up as a paragon of the "faithful" (Heb. 11:31). David used deception in fighting the enemies of God's people. This incident illustrates that the Bible is a very realistic, historical book. It pictures life just as men live it; it does not turn away from the truth to cover up the weaknesses of the human race (even of the "heroes of the faith"). The faithfulness of the Bible in not concealing what may be of questionable morality (even when it involves God's "saints") shows the honesty and accuracy of the historian. **It strengthens our faith in the Bible as the word of God and not of men.**

Pharaoh also sinned in this affair. Pharaoh probably had many other sins (idolatry, etc.) for which God could have justly chastened him. But in this case, Pharaoh repented, immediately, and sent back Abram's wife as soon as he knew. Abram, the man of God, was rebuked, and rightly so, by the man of the world. "What is this you have done to me...?" says Pharaoh. Pharaoh denounced Abram's lie; gave Sarai back to him; let Abram go out of the country with the rich possessions he had bestowed upon him. Whether Pharaoh would have killed Abram if he thought Sarai was simply Abram's sister or not, we may only speculate. We only know what the record says. Pharaoh should not have made it a practice to take any woman he wanted into his "harem." Perhaps Abram should never have gone into Egypt in the first place. Surely the Lord would have supplied their needs in Canaan, even in famine.

Lot's sojourn in Egypt with his uncle Abram may have precipitated the friction between them. Lot's respect for Abram may have fallen. Lot may have been enamored of the great wealth of the Egyptian monarchs. He began to realize that if he stayed with his uncle he was not going to get rich. Abram could have invoked patriarchal authority and insisted that Lot not go to Sodom and Gomorrah. But Abram knew that "a man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still." So Abram allowed Lot to choose. Continued strife would have destroyed any witness Abram might be able to make for Jehovah-God. Lot's obsession with materialism would have, undoubtedly, contaminated all the rest of Abram's clan. **Peace** is not only the absence of strife, **it is the presence of spirituality.**

Lot didn't move into Sodom at first---he only "pitched his tent **toward** Sodom." Just close enough to enjoy the financial and social advantages. But Lot looked down on the plain of the Jordan River near the dead Sea, where there were five prosperous, exciting cities, and decided that was where he would like to be. In those days there was still abundant rainfall, and according to Gen. 13:10, the Jordanian plain was as "the garden of the Lord...and **Egypt.**" Lot must have known of the "great wickedness and sinfulness" of Sodom and Gomorrah but he probably thought, as many a man has, that he was strong enough to live in

it and stay above it! His uncle Abram, however, “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). There are those today who try Lot’s game. They hope to have both the spiritual blessings of God and the carnal advantages of fellowship with the world. As we learned from James 4, “friendship with the world is **enmity** with God.” Whoever would be a friend of the world makes himself an **enemy of God!** What has happened in this kind of “double-mindedness” is that the person has **really chosen against God.** No man can serve two masters! It is a psychological and practical impossibility to serve two masters! He that is **not with Christ,** is against him. **NO ONE CAN HAVE IT BOTH WAYS!** So, with Lot, began the tragedy which would ultimately destroy him, his fortune and his family.

The promises of God to Abram were fundamentally **spiritual** promises as the New Testament (Romans, Galatians, Hebrews) clearly teach. Galatians 3:16 is clearest of all when it says, “Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many; but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ which is Christ.” Romans 9:6-13 is also unequivocal that God’s promises to Abram were to be fulfilled in those who believe in Jesus Christ. Although God used Abram’s physical posterity (the Jews) to be instruments of the spiritual accomplishment (Jesus Christ), God’s promises (even of the “land”) are no longer exclusively and physically to the Jews. The “kingdom” (land) and the “offspring” (children) of Abram are all **disciples of Jesus Christ, of all ages, Jew or Gentile.** The “Jews” of today occupy Palestine under **NO BIBLICAL MANDATE** whatsoever. They are no longer the exclusive covenant people of God. If they occupy Palestine and institute a civil government today, they do so as all other peoples have occupied lands and instituted governments---by conquest, treaty, or purchase.

**GENESIS 14:1---17:27**

For 12 years the 5 kings of the Valley of Siddim (possibly covered by the south end of the Dead Sea) had been paying tribute to the confederation of the East, especially to Chedorlaomer (pronounced, *keder-layOmer*). Suddenly, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela (Zoar) rebelled. Chedor-laomer formed a confederacy of 4 kings of the general area of Mesopotamia and came sweeping down the eastern table-land and valley of the Jordan. To this point in time, history outside the Bible has not identified these kings. According to archaeologists, a civilization of high achievement had flourished in this area until savagely liquidated by the kings of the East. Nelson Glueck, leading archaeologist of the Jordan Valley says, "I found that every village in their path had been plundered and left in ruins, and the country-side laid waste. The population had been wiped out or led away into captivity. For 100s of years thereafter, the entire areas was like an abandoned cemetery, hideously unkempt, with all its monuments shattered and strewn in pieces on the ground. **Archaeology confirms the historical accuracy of the Bible.** The news of this devastation would have reached Abram long before the escapee (14:13) told him of Lot's capture. It was a dire threat to the security of Abram's entire clan dwelling in the south of Canaan-land. What is Abram to think? Will God come through on his promises? Should he flee to Egypt for safety? What was he supposed to do about all this? Abram was *loyal* and *faithful*. He stayed in Canaan (Mamre). He had returned from humiliation in Egypt and built an altar and consecrated himself to Jehovah. He had committed himself to a changed attitude toward God's promises so he stayed to face whatever test God had for him.

The "kings of the East" had **invaded and attacked** the sovereignty of another civilization's territory. They had slaughtered people and plundered their property and taken hostages (among whom were Lot and his family). Is "godly Abram" too nice to fight? Is he too self-righteous to help a nephew, even if the nephew deserves to be afflicted for moving into wicked Sodom? Is Abram even ethically obligated to do *anything* about **someone else's war**? Remember our study from Genesis 9---demanding a "brotherhood" of humanity responsible to stand against, with force if necessary, the murderous disregard for the sanctity of human life. **Believers ARE OBLIGATED to stand with God in this matter!** Believers, both in OT and NT have been considered by God as his "ministers" when they were judges, magistrates, soldiers, policemen, executioners. God ordained human government for the maintenance of law and order, **by the application of force**, when necessary (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 1:13-17). In Abram's day, human government among wandering tribes or clans, took patriarchal, monarchical, "city-state" form. When Abram committed himself to Jehovah, he committed **himself** to the maintenance of law and order among all of mankind, not just in his own clan. Believers must be courageous about this. When the circumstances call for it, believers must put their lives on the line (both locally and internationally) to secure law and order. Every American citizen is **obligated** by the U.S. Constitution, to "insure domestic tranquillity, and provide for the common defense..." That is in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. Every U.S. citizen is bound by law to uphold that Constitution. Any American who does not want to be obedient to that Constitution should leave America for some other nation! But it's not only "Constitutional" it is **Biblical!** **So every Christian is obligated to uphold law and order wherever that Christian lives!**

God **promised** Abram that his "descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be **slaves** there, and they will be oppressed for four hundred years." Gen. 15:13. Four hundred years of oppression would make them "hunger and thirst" after **freedom** (at least

temporarily). Don't forget, that almost immediately upon their release, when Pharaoh and his army was pursuing them, they griped and complained and wished they were back in Egypt. The text gives one reason God kept them in Egypt for 400 years--- "...and afterward they shall come out **with great possessions.**" 15:14. In 400 years they would proliferate into a "nation" and produce some "leaders" worthy of becoming heads of the nation. In 400 years they would learn how to do something other than herd goats and sheep (how to build, how to plant and grow food, etc.). "God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform." From the forming of the Church in the NT until the end of the Roman empire in A.D. 475, God allowed his "elect" (Christians) to be **severely persecuted**, first by the Jews and then all over the empire by the Gentiles (Acts & Revelation). All that was to "nurture" the Church (Rev. 12:14). It was to show Christians for all time that "...the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18f).

Abram and Sarai both were probably **obsessed** with **anxiety** about just **how** the Lord was going to "make of his descendants a great nation" when Abram and Sarai, as yet, **had no descendants at all**--let alone a **male** heir to carry on the heritage! It probably occupied large segments of their conversations with one another and their private thoughts when they were apart. Abram was 85 years old and Sarai was 75. It had been 10 years since God promised Abram offspring---AND NOTHING! God was waiting until it was **humanly IMPOSSIBLE** for them to have a child. He wishes to demonstrate his sovereignty and omnipotence. Then he will give them by his grace and almighty power a child miraculously conceived. Abram, Sarai ARE GOING TO NEED SUCH A DEMONSTRATION WHEN GOD ORDERS THEM TO SACRIFICE THE ONLY SON THEY SHALL HAVE! They had clear evidence that God **does** keep promises, but Sarai couldn't wait! Her trust in the Lord wavers---and so does that of Abram. Archaeological excavations at Nuzi (in modern Iraq) found clay tablets of the ancient civilizations of Abram's time confirming the legal and customary practice of the patriarchs for a wife who was childless to be required to provide a slave girl as concubine in order that the family might have an heir. The wife, in such a case, was to have legal rights to the offspring, and if the formerly childless couple should later have a child of their own, they could not thrust out the child of the concubine. Sarai was following "customs" rather than the word of God. And that has been a problem of countless **believers** through the centuries. At first Sarai thought she might be "built up" (Hebrew, 16:2, *aibbaneh mimmenah*, literally, "I may be built up from her...") Sarai envisioned her own prestige increasing by obtaining a *legal* heir through Hagar. Sarai sought status "by proxy." But it didn't quite come out that way! Naturally, when Hagar conceived, she "looked with contempt" upon her mistress, Sarai. Sarai complained to Abram that he should assert himself and do something with Hagar; Abram told Sarai to deal with the situation. So the pregnant Hagar was banished to the desert! Heroes of the faith--- Abram and Sarai.

Hagar was apparently the injured party in this mess so the Lord God, upholder of justice, looked after her. God will give her child innumerable progeny. The child is even named by Jehovah, "Ishmael" meaning, "God hears." Abram took Hagar back into his clan and raised Ishmael as a son. But, Hagar's son was to be intractable and nomadic like the "wild ass" of the desert. The offspring of Hagar and consequently of Ishmael, would live in a never-ending adversarial relationship toward everyone else near them and even toward one another. Ishmael's descendants would roam the deserts of the Middle-East and feudal lords, incessantly fighting one another and, **especially, the Jews. Does history confirm this prophecy---even today---or not?!** Descendants of Ishmael are modern Arabic peoples (not necessarily all Moslems, for Islam is a "religion" embraced by those of almost every people group in the world today, while some Arabs are Christians). Ishmael had 12 sons who formed 12 tribes or nations, called by their names, inhabiting south Arabia. **No conqueror, no**



**matter how great, has ever been able to totally subdue these Ishmaelites!** Mohammed was a descendant of Ishmael. His religion of Islam is strictly monotheistic and was copied after Judaism. Hagar learned and believed many things about Abram's God and passed it on to her child Ishmael---but one thing, the most important thing, she did not seem to learn was about "The Seed" and The Covenant.

Abram is 99 and Sarai is 90---past the age for child-bearing for sure! God appeared to Abram and called himself, *El-Shaddai*, "God, The Mighty One" to emphasize his **omnipotence**. Abram's name is changed to "Abraham" meaning, "Father of a great multitude." Abraham's part is to walk before the Lord "blamelessly" (Hebrew, *tamim*, meaning, "whole, complete, fully," see Lev. 3:9 where the word is translated, "entire.") Of course, Abraham is not going to be "without sin" but he is to commit himself "entirely" to God. God is going to test Abraham's total commitment (Gen. 22:9-14)! Presently God reiterates his covenant with Abraham to give his descendants the land of Palestine. **But this covenant has as its ultimate fulfillment, a spiritual goal, not a physical bit of land in the Middle-East!** If God can protect Abraham and his family miraculously, if he can give Abraham a son miraculously, then God can give Abraham someone else's land if he wishes. Actually it is not someone else's land anyway---IT IS ALL GOD'S LAND TO GIVE OR TAKE AWAY (Isa. 45:1-25; Jer. 27:1-11; Dan. 2:20-23). The Hebrew word *olam*, is translated here, "everlasting, or forever." But it may, in context, be used figuratively, to mean something other than "everlasting." For example, it may mean "for a long time," or "during a lifetime" (see Gen. 9:12 where it is translated "for all future generations" and see 2 Chron. 33:7 where God's name "forever" in Solomon's temple cannot mean for eternity unless Solomon's temple is going to last for all eternity). In Deut. 15:17; Ex. 21:6; Num. 25:46 certain people are said to be "bond-servants forever," which certainly cannot mean eternally. Jeremiah's mother's womb was to be "forever" great (Jer. 20:17). Leviathan was made a servant of man "forever" (Job 41:4). *Olam* is used in all those instances, and even in Amos 9:11-12, to mean "as in the days of old." THIS PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM, BECAUSE IT IS FULFILLED IN CHRIST (Gal. 3:16) AND INVOLVES MEN FROM EVERY LAND AND NATION, CAN NEVER BE USED AS A BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR THE LAND OF PALESTINE BELONG TO THE JEWS FOR ALL ETERNITY! Furthermore, any Jew who has rejected the Messiah, Jesus Christ, IS NOT fulfilling the conditions of this covenant made with Abraham to "walk before the Lord, whole, complete and full." If being circumcised into the covenant of Judaism authorizes a Biblical claim to the land of Palestine, the descendants of Ishmael should have the same claim since Ishmael was circumcised (Gen. 17:23).

Any kind of "ritual" is a "prescribed **form** for conducting a ceremony." Circumcision is a "ritual" and God "prescribed" the **form---circumcision of the male foreskin**. The Hebrew word *mul* means, literally, "to cut around." Every male in Abraham's house, whether born or "bought" was to undergo this "ritual." The "ritual" was NOT primarily a hygienic procedure (although it may or may not have such properties). The "ritual" **symbolizes** the truth that God has the authority to determine who shall belong to him and who shall not. The fact that Ishmael and other male servants were included symbolizes that ultimately God's covenant would be extended **universally** to all of Abraham's **household of faith** (see Rom. 9:6:f; Gal. 3:16, etc.). It reiterates the great truth that all men are obligated to keep God's commandments whether they want to or not, simply because he is Creator and Sovereign. Unwillingness to believe God does not relieve anyone from his sovereignty (Rom. 1:18-32). Females were considered to be "represented" in the males, thus patriarchal authority was confirmed and the unity and integrity of the family as well. **The primary purpose of circumcision was for a VISIBLE sign of the covenant God made with Abraham's seed.** Not to circumcise a male descendant of Abraham was to break the covenant and meant that the uncircumcised was left

out of the promises of God's redemptive program. Physical circumcision was abolished as a sign of the covenant in the New Dispensation in Christ (Eph. 2:11-15; Co. 3:11; Gal. 6:15-16; Rom. 2:28-29; 3:30; 4:9-12; 9:6f). Baptism **by immersion in water** in obedience to the command of Christ and the Holy Spirit through the apostles, is the **new** sign of covenant relationship, signifying that the obedient one has died to the life of sin and is now consecrated to a new life of holiness in the Lord's new will. Baptism **by immersion** is offered to all human beings everywhere, whatever nationality or culture, and whosoever obeys becomes "a child of Abraham according to faith" not according to lineal or genetic descent.

Abraham "laughed at it incredulously" 17:17 (Heb. *tzachaq*). That is the same root word from which the name "Isaac" is formed. In other words, Sarah and Abraham named their son "Laugh-at-incredulously"---sounds like an American Indian name doesn't it? Just how difficult is it to believe that Jehovah-God can work **real miracles**? Evidently it is **very difficult because the majority of the world then, and today, does not believe it**. I'm not talking about what some people call "miracles" such as God's providential working in the affairs of history. I mean the **REAL MIRACLES PREDICTED BY GOD IN HIS WORD, THE BIBLE**. The **real miracles of the Bible** are either explained away as myth, hoax or superstition. **OR, on the other hand**, they are reduced to nonsense by those who call **every extraordinary event** in nature or human experience a "miracle." Abraham's laugh, however, has been interpreted by some venerable and conservative scholars to be a "laugh of incredulous joy." I have a little difficulty with that since both Abraham and Sarah cannot seem to **believe that what God has promised will actually happen**. And it does not until Gen. 21, **one year later**, just as God predicted (Gen. 17:21). Abraham's and Sarah's doubt is a natural reaction! If you were in their circumstances what would be your reaction? Don't forget how much the apostles "doubted" Jesus's promises of stupendous, miraculous things concerning his death and resurrection, **EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD MIRACLE AFTER MIRACLE** to substantiate his claims to be able to do so! But that does not make doubting God's promises right. We are supposed to have such faith in God's ability to do what he promised that we will not doubt him at all! **DO WE?**

## GENESIS 18:1--20:18

I don't think Abraham knew *at first* who these "strangers" were. One of them was *Jehovah* translated "the Lord" 18:1 (RSV). This was not God-Incarnated, as God came to earth in Jesus Christ. The incarnation of God in his Son, Jesus, was *monogenes* ("only one of its kind") according to John 1:14. The "Lord" here was probably one of God's **angels**, high up in the hierarchy of angelic positions. No OT saint ever "saw God" (John 1:17)---not even Moses. There are numerous *theophanies* of God in the OT---Isa. 6:1ff; Ezek. 1 & 2; Dan. 7:1ff; Zech., but no "incarnation" of God occurred in the OT. Abraham treated the three "men" with unfeigned hospitality which was customary of that time and culture and hallowed in the Bible in both OT and NT. Once they asked for "Sarah, his wife" Abraham could conclude they were persons of supernatural knowledge---spokes-persons for none other than **Jehovah-God** (God of Covenant).

The messenger from God ("the Lord") insisted on reminding Sarah she had "laughed" in order to give evidence that he had supernatural abilities, thus his promise to "return...in the spring" and give Sarah a son was certain to come to pass. Remember, Sarah had "laughed within herself," i.e., silently. To know that took some measure of prescience. Both Sarah and Abraham had become doubtful, even cynical, about God's verbal promise (Gen. 15:1f). If Sarah was ever to "receive strength to conceive seed, and be delivered of a child when she was past age" (Heb. 11:11), her faith must be *strengthened*. God proceeds to do that through his messenger. His statement to Sarah is one of the greatest verses of the Bible, "Is anything too hard ("wonderful") for the Lord?" Sarah recognized the supernatural nature of the "visitors" for she "feared" (18:15).

If God was to work toward the spiritual maturation of Abraham the facts about Sodom must not be hidden. Abraham needed to know the *reason* for the terrible destruction that was about to come upon Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities "of the plain of Siddim." If Abraham was to become "father of the faithful" he must be fitted to become teacher of the faithfulness of God **because all human faithfulness is a consequence of knowing and trusting God's faithfulness**. Abraham was a "friend of God" and God became a "friend of Abraham" by taking Abraham into his confidence about the "cities of the plain..." To make it clear that he, as Just Judge of all the earth does nothing without first being in full possession of all the facts, God's messenger says, "I will go down to see whether...if not I will know..." God knows, of course, but he wants **Abraham** to be **sure** God knows---there must be no room for doubt in Abraham's mind.

Apparently there was some question in the mind of Abraham about the *justice* of destroying an entire metro-plex of cities and thousands of people. If only a **few** people in these cities should be righteous, it seemed to Abraham a contradiction of God's love, mercifulness and righteousness. It just didn't seem "just" to Abraham. So he cries out to God's messengers, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (18:25). God is pleased with our intercessory prayers. That demonstrates the kind of mercifulness and tenderness we need to compel us to agonize over the lostness of sinners. BUT that does **not** mean God will always deliver those for whom we intercede (cf. Jer. 11:14; 14:11; 15:1; 16:5; Ezek. 14:14,20). HUMAN BEINGS MUST ACKNOWLEDGE, BY FAITH, THAT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH WILL ALWAYS DO RIGHT (JUSTLY). Human information (apart from divine revelation, the Bible) about

**ultimate** righteousness and justice is inadequate---and often perverted by our sinful inclinations. God is love, but because he loves **holiness and truth**, he is also **just** (Psa. 84:14; 97:1-2; 145:17). His judgments are according to **all the truth, and nothing but the truth**. His judgments are impartial, universal and certain. His judgments are based on his omniscient knowledge of secret motives as well as outward conduct.

The scene depicted in these verses is almost unbelievable in its documentation of total *depravity* (Gen. 19:1-38). This is a total city given to degeneracy. It is disgusting and terrifying for it is saturated with *violence* as well as sexual perversity. Homosexuality is a **sin**. It is an unnatural act; an irrational act. Homosexuality *universalized* becomes genocide---the human race would eventually be exterminated. Homosexuality is **moral choice**. That is a well-established medical fact. Homosexuality is **not inherited**---no human being is born homosexual. Brothers and sisters of homosexuals are not homosexuals, neither are all parents of homosexuals. *The Beacon*, 10/08, a monthly publication of R.L. Beasley Ministries, P.O. Box 2862, Joplin, MO, 64803 reported that “in March, 2007, Dr. Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project said, “Homosexuality is not hardwired. There is no gay gene. We mapped the human genome. We now know there is no genetic cause for homosexuality.” Environmental background may intensify a person’s desire to choose homosexual experience, but such background does not make such a choice *inevitable*. Homosexuality was an **abomination** in the law of God given to Moses (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Deut. 23:19-18; Judg. 19:22f) and punishable by death. The New Testament (God’s Covenant Law under Christ) is plain that anyone practicing homosexuality will not inherit heaven (Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10). Homosexuality can be repented of and forgiven like any other sin. It is as **socially destructive** as incest and bestiality. Spiritually, homosexual behavior is no more condemning than any other sin not repented—including lying under oath!

God rained brimstone and fire down out of heaven upon Sodom & Gomorrah. Henry Morris thinks God triggered a great earthquake which allowed great quantities of sulphuric and hydrocarbon gases to escape into the atmosphere and then God ignited it with lightning causing a tremendous explosion and incinerating fire. But God could certainly have sent *special, supernatural fire* (Judg. 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38, etc.) to *destroy* these cities. The Greek word Peter uses to describe the Lord’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in 2 Pet. 2:6 is *katastrophe*, in English, a “catastrophe,” Many people today would defend Lot’s wife for “looking back” on some **relativistic** basis like “When your sons-in-law and your beautiful home is being incinerated what’s wrong with just ‘looking back’?” or “I can’t accept a Bible or a God that would not allow her to ‘look back’.” But when God says, **“do not look back”** he means, **DO NOT LOOK BACK---period!** Jesus teaches that her “looking back” indicated she was too attached to her worldly possessions to be able to give them up, believing that God had nothing better for her (Luke 17:22-37). Anything we have in this world (even children) is not worth disobedience toward God! We brought nothing into this world and we shall take nothing out---We must be ready to give any of it up to serve the Lord and keep his commandments.

Lot’s family was reared in an environment where incest was probably not all that uncommon or prohibited. The two daughters seduced Lot, but Lot was undoubtedly not so drunk he could have avoided this perversity so he probably has some guilt in the matter. The two girls were not doing it out of uncontrolled sexual lust, but out of unbelief and anxiety for worldly survival (19:30-38). Incest is **defined** and strictly **forbidden** in the OT (and certainly would be forbidden in the NT), Lev. 18:6-18; 20:11-12; 20:17-21; Deut. 22:30; 27:20-23; Ezek. 22:11; 19:31-36). Incidences of **incest** are, Lot here, Reuben, Gen. 35:22; 49:4; Judah, Gen. 38:16-

18; 1 Chron. 2:4; Amnon, 2 Sam. 13:14; Absalom, 2 Sam. 16:21-22 see also Gen. 20:12-13; Ex. 6:20. Marrying one's **half-sister** as in Abraham's case was not prohibited by the law of Moses therefore it would not be prohibited in patriarchal system either. Most of the Moabites and Ammonites (progeny of this incestuous relationship) became idolaters, made human sacrifices, were guilty of gross immoralities, and were inveterate enemies of God's redemptive program. Still, a few of them were godly people. **Ruth**, a Moabite woman became wife of Boaz and an ancestress of Jesus Christ. Naamah, also a Moabitess, became a wife of Solomon, mother of Rehoboam, and an ancestress of Jesus Christ.

Abraham lied to Abimelech out of fear of life and limb. Abimelech was a powerful Philistine king. Whatever the case, it was a human weakness and sin against God. God had demonstrated that he was able to deliver them from the exact, same, circumstances earlier in Egypt (Gen. 12). Perhaps Abraham and Sarah were both still trying to take the preservation of their lives into their own hands because they feared there would be no progeny if they didn't lie. But it is still a sin, no matter how it may be rationalized. **We all sin---and we all repeat the same sins!** (Rom. 7:15-20). But God has the power available for us to eventually conquer specific sins, if we call on him in faith (Psa. 119:11; 1 Cor. 10:13). The person who has faith in Christ, when sinning, will repent, and God has promised by the blood of Jesus, to make that man absolutely righteous by imputation (2 Cor. 5:21). Those who **do not believe in Christ** have no such promise!



**GENESIS 21:1--23:20**

There are 6 other miraculous human-birth-conceptions mentioned in the Bible: (a) Rebekah, Gen. 25:21; (b) Rachel, Gen. 30:22; (c) Manoah's wife, Judg. 13:3-24; (d) Hannah, 1 Sam. 1:19-20; (e) Elizabeth, Luke 1:24-58; and **Mary**, mother of Jesus Christ, impregnated by the Holy Spirit of God, Matt. 1:18-20 Luke 1:31-35. No physical problem can stand in the way of God's will in redeeming humanity. God is **faithful** to keep his word (Gen. 21:1)---Isaac, the "son of promise" is born to parents who could not physically procreate! God fulfilled his promise **exactly** when he said he would!

Sarah saw Ishmael "mocking" (Heb. *tzacheq*, literally, "laughing") Isaac. This same Hebrew word is also translated "idolatry" (Ex. 32:6), "immorality or insult (Gen. 39:17), and murder or fight to the death (2 Sam. 2:14f). RSV translates the word "playing" (Gen. 21:8), but Galatians 4:29 settles the question as to how the word should be translated---it says, "he that was born after the flesh **persecuted** him that was born after the spirit..." So it was a **serious confrontation** between the child of "promise" and the handmaiden's son probably about who was to be the **heir** of the "covenant promise." Ishmael was probably, at the urging of his mother, "rough-housing" Isaac the younger of the two, making sport or tormenting Isaac, maliciously. There must have been arguments between the mothers, also, about who was to get the inheritance of Abraham. Ishmael was the "first born" and expected it to be rightfully his. But Sarah would not tolerate Ishmael even to be heir "with" Isaac; she insisted Isaac was to be Abraham's **only heir**! Sarah was saying what God had said earlier!

Doesn't it seem immoral to cast out two helpless people (Hagar and Ishmael) for just a childish *persecution*? Even Abraham had a problem with Sarah's demand (21:11). There is an indication that Abraham had previously thought that Ishmael was to be his heir (Gen. 17:18). But it was God's purpose that Isaac be **sole** heir of the spiritual calling to Abraham. The dissenting and destructive presence of Ishmael must be removed from the "family" (Rom. 9:7-8; Heb. 11:18). Abraham was told by God to go against **his own feelings** of justice and compassion in **obedience to God's way of doing things**! We see Abraham's faith being **constantly tested**! Should we expect less from God in the New Dispensation? Christians dare not interpret the word of God (the Bible) according to their feelings (see Num. 15:39)---they must interpret their feelings according to the Bible! If **God** told Abraham to do as Sarah had told him, and God did (Gen. 21:12), then it was **not** immoral for Abraham to do it. **God's** commandments are **never** immoral (even though human beings may want to judge them so). Capital punishment for capital crime is never immoral, although many human beings want to think so. Even the great apostle Paul agreed to be executed if he could be convicted of a capital crime (Acts 25:11).

Abimelech acknowledged that Almighty God was with Abraham so Abimelech sought some sort of peaceful alliance with the powerful nomadic chieftain, Abraham. Up until the "well" incident, Abimelech had been decent toward Abraham. Through his own kindness, Abimelech had permitted Abraham to live in the land surrounding Gerar (seat of Abimelech's royal palace). Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant of peace between them. When some of Abimelech's people violently took a well that Abraham's people had dug, Abimelech did not know such violence had been wrought and chided Abraham for not telling him of it sooner. Abraham took animals and gave them to Abimelech to **seal their peace agreement**. But, in addition to that, Abraham gave Abimelech **seven ewe lambs** so that when Abimelech accepted them it would signify Abimelech's **renunciation** of all claim to the well in question.

Abraham did not just want peace--HE WANTED A **JUST** PEACE WITH HIS WELL BACK. The word **Beer-sheba** means, "**well-of-the-oath**." Even Christians are commanded, "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18; see also 1 Thess. 4:10-12).

Time after time Abraham (and Sarah) tried to take matters into their own hands and serve God as they pleased. Now God will give Abraham the **ultimate test** to see if Abraham has finally **surrendered completely to God's will**. Does God ask for total human sacrifice? IN ONE SENSE OF THE WORD, YES! (see Luke 14:27,33; Rom 6:1-5; 12:1-2, etc.). In another sense of the word, No! It is never unethical to obey to the letter any explicit command of God's Word. The highest moral law of all is to obey the plain and clear commandment (as hermeneutically understood) of God's word without hesitation. The command of God not to **murder** another human being physically delineates man's highest duty to *man*. Bug if God commands Abraham to slay his son as an offering to him, such command supercedes the other because man's highest duty is to **God**. There are some things God has ordered in his creation that are to be acknowledged as right-in-themselves, and human reason will judge them as right. Human beings know those things because to **universalize** them proves them right. Human reason simply asks what the effect would be if every person would do the same thing under the same circumstances---murder, theft, adultery, perjury, oath-breaking, all fall under this category. There are other things God commands whose "rightness" cannot be determined by human reason. For these things there is no logical connection between the thing commanded and the end in view. The only **reason** for such a command is simply that God has ordained it.

Abraham learned he must obey God in spite of his feelings! Abraham loved *both* of his sons. Ishmael, however, mocked the idea that God had chosen Isaac as heir and persecuted God's chosen. When God told Abraham to do as Sarah said and banish Ishmael, Abraham's feelings rebelled---his heart said, "NO!" But God said, "YES!" We are all tempted (often) to "go with our feelings" (as almost every TV show "preaches") instead of reason and the plain, direct commandment of God in his word. There is even a bumper-sticker which says, "It can't be wrong if it **feels** good." (a) it didn't feel good for Joseph to deny himself sexual relations with Potiphar's wife---but it was right; (b) it didn't feel good for Samuel to have to tell his very close friend, King Saul, that God had taken the kingdom from him----but he did; (c) it didn't feel good for Jeremiah to tell his countrymen to surrender tot he Babylonian invaders---but he did; (d) it didn't **feel** right for Jesus to submit to the humiliating death on the cross, and he didn't **deserve** it----but he did! **Feelings are NEVER a trustworthy criterion as to what truth is or what God's will for our life is!** The truth is usually directly **opposite** to our feelings! Loving someone is not **based** on feeling. Loving someone is a **result** of caring and doing what is right toward both God and human beings (according to God's definition of what is right) *whether we feel like loving or not!* Abraham's **feelings** undoubtedly told him not to kill his son Isaac as an offering to God, but it was a clear, unequivocal command of God and Abraham proceeded to obey it **in spite of his feelings**. Obeying clear, unequivocal commands of God is done **by faith and with love for God**. Such commands are designed by God to **prove** human faith. In the test of our faith there are THREE degrees in obedience to God's positive commands: (a) to obey when a human being *feels* that there is no logical connection between the thing commanded and the end in view (Exodus 12:1-14); (b) to obey a divine command when a human being *feels* that the thing commanded cannot do any good in itself (2 Sam 6:6-7); (c) to obey a divine command when a human being *feels* that the thing commanded is in itself *wrong* (Gen. 22:1-3).

Sarah became a **paragon** of faith and obedience. Every believer in God who "does right and

lets nothing terrify” is a child of Sarah. Just like, by faith, we are children of Abraham (Rom. 4 & 9). Sarah, by faith, put herself in relationship with God to be used in a powerful way to bring God’s redemption to all mankind (Heb. 11:11-12). Sarah became a **type** of God’s covenant of freedom through the forgiveness of sin (Gal. 4:21-31). So, for nearly 4000 years now Sarah has been held up in divine history as a woman, flawed though she was, who was used mightily by God in the scheme of redemption. Sarah fought no battles like Joan of Arc, she made no great scientific discoveries like Madam Currie, she served in no senates, she did not star in any plays or movies, she authored no great prose or poetry, but **God recorded her name in his redemptive record for all the world to read and emulate!** The world constantly needs women like Sarah!

Abraham mourned because his heart (feelings) was broken! He had lost the love of his life! Mourning and weeping can be either appropriate or inappropriate---according to the motivation of the heart. Abraham mourned not in *unbelief*, for both he and Sarah believed in the resurrection. His mourning was for the separation that must be endured. His mourning was his way of respectful gratitude and his way of expressing a final show of love for the woman who shared and contributed to his life in so many intimate and special ways. Joseph mourned his father’s passing (Gen. 50:1); David wept at the death of his infant child (2 Sam. 12:16); Job mourned the death of his children (Job 1:20-21); Devout men grieved the death of Stephen (Acts 8:2); Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). The Lord knows we will mourn and weep in this world; righteous men will weep over wrong and sin and the results of sin. Loving people will weep over the lost (Acts 20:31). Christians should **not** grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). But it is not wrong to be sad nor wrong to weep for the right reasons. **God promises that in the next life, for the saved, there will be no more mourning nor more death, no more frustration, no more separation.** But while we are here, tears and grief are ways of dealing with frustrations and longings---so long as tears and grief do not lead to unbelief.

**GENESIS 24:1---26:35**

Sarah had passed away. Abraham was very old. Isaac was no “spring-chicken.” Abraham knew that it was *profoundly* important that Isaac have the comfort and strength of woman in his life. He knew it was time Isaac had a wife. He also knew that it was **very important** that both Isaac and his “wife” be completely united in their faith in the Lord God in order to keep alive the covenant faith for the next generation. She must be willing to “leave her father and mother and cleave to her husband....” It was **customary** in that society for the father to choose wives for their sons and husbands for their daughters. Although Isaac was 40 years old, he trusted his father’s judgment about the woman who should be his wife. **There is a great deal to be said in favor of this ancient custom even today.** Abraham’s **concern** for a spiritually-minded wife for Isaac will put many Christian parents to shame! The matter of preserving the Messianic inheritance in Jesus Christ is the business of **every Christian**. The church is the family of God in the world to save the world. But the church is made up essentially of families (i.e., **marriages**). Christians should marry Christians. Young people contemplating marriage should **seek the advice of Christian parents and act on that advice**. Being a Christian is pleasing the Lord even in your choice of a spouse.

Abraham’s servant took great care to find exactly the kind of woman Isaac needed for a wife---the servant knew what Abraham wanted for Isaac. She must be from Abraham’s *kinsmen* (24:4); she must be fair to look upon (24:16); she must be chaste, a virgin (24:16); she must strong and healthy enough to draw water and tend flocks (24:14); she should be industrious, intelligent, **gracious**, and **considerate** (24:17-25). The servant prayed to God for guidance. He proposed that if he found a woman and asked her for a drink and she, on her own initiative, would offer to help water his ten camels, this would be a “sign” God approved of her. One small woman offering on her own to water a stranger’s ten camels (camels drink a lot of water) would prove definitely he had a woman with the right spirit to make a good wife! Selecting a soul-mate (a spouse; husband **or** wife) one would do well to follow the criterion of Abraham’s servant and find someone who is (a) self-giving, (b) kind, (c) courteous, (d) hospitable, (e) chaste, i.e., sexually pure, (f) and believes in God. “Looks” have very little to do with it. Of course, no one wants to marry someone who dresses slovenly, who has no self-control in eating, or who doesn’t keep clean and neat in physique. But, physical “beauty” is mostly determined and **promoted** by “hucksters” (i.e., cosmetics companies, clothing companies, dietary companies) in order to sell their products. **Real beauty is of the soul and spirit!**

Abraham’s servant, as an employee, is a good example to follow. He was so trustworthy, Abraham would have left his whole estate to him before Isaac was born. Trustworthiness, **integrity**, going the “second mile”, and loyalty to one’s employer can be a great witness for the Lord. One does not have to hand out gospel tracts on the job to testify to Christ---just do your job, better than is expected of you, and you will have people asking about your faith. My Dad used to tell about a German gentleman who lived next door to us in Springfield, MO, back in the 1930s. The old gentleman came from Germany to the U.S., got a job in an iron foundry, reared his children, and was a caring and helpful neighbor. He was a Christian. But his wife became mentally ill and had to be institutionalized. He was all alone day after day, year after year. Rather than spend 5 cents for a streetcar, he would walk almost clear across the city every morning and evening to and from work (he needed the money for his wife’s illness). One day a piece of lumber (a 2 X 12) was broken on the job at the foundry. The foreman blamed Mr. Gunther. With his own money, he went to a lumber yard, bought a new 2

X 12, and carried it on his back, walking all the way across the city of Springfield, to replace something he had not destroyed in the first place. THAT IS **INTEGRITY!** See Colossians 4:22-25 and Ephesians 6:5-9

Perhaps the servant left the next morning after he “discovered” Rebekah because he was afraid Rebekah would change her mind. Rebekah hardly had time to say, “Goodbye”! But she went! Of course, Abraham was a very old man, so there would be urgency in the servant’s need to return to him with a “wife” for Isaac. Abraham would want to know the “mission was accomplished” before he died. But, most important, Isaac was urgently needing female companionship since his mother’s death (24:67). Rebekah took her “nurse and maid” with her, indicating her family was not exactly poverty-stricken! She went with her family’s blessing and prayers for many progeny and prosperity. They would never see her again! It must have been an emotional parting---but the Bible is not designed to record all that detail!

The marriage was **arranged** by the families. Isaac married her. Then he loved her! People today talk about “falling in love” first, then marrying. The Biblical ideal is closer to the correct way a marriage really develops. Americans need to **learn what LOVE really is!** Isaac did not “fall in love” with Rebekah---he married her **and then** he loved her! Modern society has been hoodwinked into thinking love is something you must feel before you do. Love is something you **decided to do and will to do it!** And that, in spite of your feelings! Many young people enter marriage today with the idea, “I love you because you make ME **feel** good (either sensually or egotistically). Marriage should be entered with the attitude: “I love you and want to make you happy no matter what it may **cost** me!” Love is something learned by **doing**. Love grows by loving. Love does not come all at once with a rush of feeling, bells ringing, whistles blowing. That kind of “feeling” is **infatuation**, and it is shallow and superficial, dependent upon pleasant circumstances. Love is something one must often **force** oneself to do when the circumstances are very unpleasant! Married folks **must love** when their pride is hurt, when they are “put upon,” when they think something else would be better or more thrilling, and when they don’t want to!

Rebekah was sterile, just as Sarah was, but Isaac prayed and the Lord answered. Rebekah conceived **twins**. And Rebekah felt more than normal fetal movement in her womb---**an actual struggle was taking place in her womb and Rebekah seemed to realize that this was a PORTENT of something significant.** There is so much that medical science still does not know concerning the growth of the human embryo. Present day **abortionists** seem to think that an embryo is not really a person until its birth. The Bible references to prenatal life discussing embryonic development and attitudes indicate that there is knowledge, feelings and attitudes in embryonic life (Psa. 139:14-16; Eccl. 11:5; Luke 1:44, etc.). That means human fetuses are living persons! Rebekah’s babies contended with one another to be “first” soon after birth, what was to prevent them from doing so before they were born? Rebekah was puzzled and called on the Lord for an answer---the Lord answered that the twins in her womb were of two **utterly different temperaments**. That’s not unusual! The nations they would establish would pass on these tendencies to their offspring by training. The struggle begun in her womb has continued throughout history until this very day---Edomite (Arab) versus Israelite! God told Rebekah that the **younger** (which would be Jacob) son would have the covenant promises. It was God’s will that the younger must receive the birthright and blessing! Remember that when we study Jacob’s alleged “deception” of Esau! Human beings have normally believed that the “first-born” should dispense the estate when the parents die. Even Abraham had to be told more than once that it was not Ishmael but Isaac (second born) who was to be son of promise and receive the estate. God does not work according to the ways of men; it is significant that neither Seth, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, nor



David were “first-born” sons; and it is not certain that any of the rest of the Israelite patriarchs who inherited the Messianic birthright were. God is sovereign and may do as he wills, but he is not capricious and always has a reason for what he does. The **totality** of humanity’s **free** actions constitutes God’s foreknowledge. God’s knowledge embraces, **in a single thought**, all the events of the space-time world. Strictly speaking, God does not foreknow, but he knows **all at once the total outcome of all history which is determined by all the free choices and actions of all human beings**. We merely think of it as “foreknowledge.”

God knew the younger would be qualified **spiritually** and morally to transmit the seed and the covenant promises, and God knew the elder son **would not** (see Hosea 12:2-6; Malachi 1:1-5; Rom. 9:10-13). Even Isaac wanted to “bless” Esau because of his “feeling” toward Esau, but God chose Jacob and rejected Esau (Heb. 12:15-17). Actually, Jacob chose God and Esau rejected God---and God knew it! Esau, the outgoing, “go-get-em,” charismatic, virile, “quick-to-spoil-his-father,” sensual type would probably be chosen to lead a corporation today. Esau is an example of how a man with “charisma” with a flawed character may be more attractive than another who has a basically good character but is an introvert. Esau’s basic fault was that he lived only in the immediate moment, with his sensate feelings, and did not care for life’s great spiritual possibilities. He lived on an emotional roller-coaster; he was led by his impulses and appetites. One day he despised his birthright; the next day he was crying his heart out begging to “get something out of the deal.” One day he vows to kill his brother Jacob, later he falls on Jacob’s neck, embracing him as his “long lost brother.”

Esau is the classic example of much of the world today. **Esau is the villain** in this story. “Bread” (or a bowl of red bean soup) in the hand is worth two spiritual birthrights in the bush was his motto. The world is contemptuous of “pie in the sky, bye and bye.” Worldlings are not contemptuous of “religion” so long as it doesn’t interfere with fleshly values and pursuits. Most of the world is **not** willing to discipline or control the flesh in order to pursue spiritual values. Strangely enough this is even true in politics. Most of the world thinks political philosophies which pursue spiritual values of honesty, truth, justice, freedom, and morality are outdated and useless. The world wants political leaders who will promise “bean soup” for everyone---without cost, and won’t mess with their morals. Jesus placed **constant, clear, emphatic, and imperative exhortation** on this issue! Anyone **not** putting **spiritual** values **first** in life just isn’t a Christian. Esau must have **what** he wanted **when** he wanted it, and the consequences could go hang---until the consequences come, then it was groaning and bitter remorse, but **no real repentance**.

There are numerous **moral imperatives** God has **created** inherently in every human being who is able to **reason**. Such scriptures as Romans 1:18-32; 2:12-16; Psalms 19:1-4; Eccl. 3:1-15 substantiate this. All one has to do is rationally (not emotionally) **universalize** murder, adultery, thievery, etc., to comprehend that there are some moral limitations beyond which the human race cannot go without destroying society. In other words, what if any person, at any time, for any “feeling” or no feeling at all, could murder another person and suffer no punishment or consequences for it? If one person may be permitted to do so, why not permit every person to do so? The very idea that illicit, irresponsible, promiscuous sexual intercourse, without the legal bindings of marital laws, could be practiced on a **universal** scale has its answer within the proposition. It would destroy society as we know it. Anarchy would ensue! If one adulterer may be excused, why not excuse all adulterers? What makes one adultery more acceptable than another? The very fabric of social order depends upon these generally-accepted **scruples**. Besides, history proves this proposition to be **true**! Every tribe or society or civilization, no matter how “primitive,” discovered by the archaeologist or anthropologist, has been found to have a “moral code” and in everyone of them (even

though some of them are polygamous as far as marriage is concerned) **adultery** is punished. It is not surprising, then, that the pagan Philistines would have scruples against adultery.

Isaac opened up the filled in wells Abraham had previous dug in the valley of Gerar. Abimelech's people quarreled with Isaac's people and claimed those wells for themselves. Isaac could have resisted this and demanded the wells by right of former covenant with his father Abraham and the former Abimelech (Gen. 20:15). He probably would have won any kind of military confrontation with the Philistines. But Isaac moved south of Gerar, some 25-30 miles, and dug a third well, over which there was no quarrel, and so he named it or *Rechovoth* which means, "The Well of Broad Places." From there he went about 20 miles northeast to Beersheba and dug another well and the Lord confirmed the Messianic promise to him again. Isaac is a magnanimous, peaceful, charitable man. When he has someone at a disadvantage, he does not exploit him. Isaac learned this kind of peace from his father Abraham. Agitating others even when one has rights he may claim, never helps the kingdom of God (see 1 Cor. 6:7-8). Isaac forgave Abimelech. Forgiveness is probably the most **uncultivated of all Christian virtues**. There are people who will never miss a service of the church, even if they have to be wheeled in on a wheel-chair, but they still begrudge what someone did to "slight" them or "cheat" them decades ago! So what good is their perfect attendance? Forgiveness is a **burden** the **forgiver** has to **bear**! There is no other way to forgive someone else. If you wait until your offender has made perfect restitution or has atoned some other way, you will **never** forgive him! Forgiveness, however, does not mean one does not stand for what is right nor stand for justice. **BUT ISAAC, LIKE HIS FATHER ABRAHAM, IS A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR US IN THE STATEMENT:** "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all." Rom. 12:18

**GENESIS 27:1---28:22**

Isaac loved to eat the wild-game Esau brought to him. Isaac may have also enjoyed, vicariously, a lost-youth he had never experienced through Esau the rough, strong, bold hunter-type. Since Rebekah was openly showing favoritism toward Jacob, Isaac probably tried to keep the family on “an even keel” by compensating and showing favoritism toward Esau. Isaac was old and now blind and thought he was about to die (he was now 135 yrs. old, but didn’t actually die for another 45 years when he was 180!). Excessive parental partiality usually leads to character weaknesses in both parent and child. Esau was apparently led to believe, by his father’s partiality to him, that he could despise the spiritual aspect of his family heritage and have the financial heritage if he wished. Isaac was seduced by his own partiality to think he could disobey God’s revealed will about the “blessing” and get away with it. Rebekah and Jacob decided they should run ahead of God’s timing in obtaining the spiritual blessing. Partiality is based on emotions and feelings and takes leave of reason. Partiality is contrary to the truth. Partiality is forbidden in the Bible (Matt. 5:43-48; James 2:9; Deut. 1:17; Lev. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:21; Prov. 24:23; Job 13:10; Deut. 16:19-20; Malachi 2:9). It creates discord (Matt. 20;24; Acts 6:1ff; 1 Cor. Ch. 11 — 14). Partiality is a denigration of God (Jer. 18:13ff; Rom. 2:1ff; Gal. 2:11ff)---it defiles the conscience and destroys the soul.

**A break had to come!** Isaac was about to forfeit the whole Messianic program by turning it over to someone who had nothing but *contempt* for it! It was Isaac’s self-indulgence that precipitated the break. Isaac was about to foul up their Messianic destiny without talking it over with Rebekah---she had to find out accidentally. Isaac was ashamed of what he was doing---he knew Rebekah would not approve so he was hoping to get the deed done before she could interfere. Isaac was wrong in this issue---Rebekah was right! God revealed his will about Jacob and Esau to Rebekah. She took the lead in seeing that Jacob got the patriarchal “blessing” because Isaac was defaulting. God approved of Rebekah’s standing in the gap since Isaac was not accepting the position of spiritual leadership in the family in this issue, at least. It is clear from the Bible that God wants the male to assume the place of spiritual leadership in the family unit, **and in the church**, and probably in the social-civic structures. But it is also clear that men sometimes forfeit their God-ordained role so God accepts and uses female leadership (e.g., Abigail, Esther, Naomi, women Judges, women prophetesses, Jochebed, Rahab, Lydia, Phoebe, the Woman of Samaria, Eunice, Lois, etal.). Rebekah was **not meddling**---it is not meddling for women to take spiritual leadership when men will not. Many men and children would not be Christians today if women had not “pushed” and taken temporary leadership when men had defaulted in the area of spirituality. That’s how it happened in this author’s family!

When Jacob obtained the “birthright” there was **no deception whatsoever** (Gen. 25). Esau **knew what he was doing**---he wanted it that way. But with the “blessing” **there is deception**, deliberate and planned. The big **moral question** is: How could God condone what Jacob and Rebekah did? How could God use Jacob to perpetuate the Messianic program since he was a deceitful person? Jacob’s actions are *commendable* in about the same way Jesus commended the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-13. Jesus did **not** commend the steward’s method, but he held the steward’s *wisdom* and *valuations* up in sharp contrast to the lethargy and stupidity of some Christians! There is not one single instance **in the Bible** of criticism of Jacob (except by Esau and Laban who were unworthy critics). Every time God spoke to Jacob or of Jacob, it was in a message of blessing and promise---never one of rebuke or chastisement. REMEMBER WHAT GOD ACTUALLY SAID---NOT WHAT WE

**FEEL HE SHOULD HAVE SAID!** Jacob is loved, approved of and even held up as an example for all the Jews in their pursuit of God's heritage (Hosea 12:1-14). God loved Jacob but hated Esau (Mal. 1:2-3). The faith of Jacob to prevail in God's call to fulfill the Messianic destiny could have been that of the later Jews in Hosea's day if they had availed themselves of it. God has used **penitent sinners** all through history as his co-workers in his program to redeem creation---from Adam to you and me! There is Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, John, and Alexander Campbell. The only **sinless Person ever to live on this earth was Jesus Christ of Nazareth**. Even his mother, Mary, was a sinner (she was not immaculately conceived). Remember---a serious disobedience of God's will was about to take place should Isaac give the blessing to Esau. Drastic measures needed to be taken. Should Rebekah and Jacob just sit by and hope for a miracle? Are men to always sit by when God's will is being violated to the hurt of individuals and churches and wait for God to perform a miracle? The Hebrew midwives didn't! Jonathan didn't (1 Sam. 14)!

The disguised Jacob had scarcely left Isaac after receiving the patriarchal "blessing" than Esau returned from a hunting trip. Isaac "trembled" (Heb. *charad*, "to shake violently") probably with anger at Jacob, concern for Esau, grief at Rebekah's treachery, resentment that his own scheme had failed, and fear that he had disobeyed God. Now it is **Esau's** turn to **repent**. Esau cried out with an *exceedingly great* (Heb. *tzeagah gedolah*) and *bitter* cry. Esau accused Jacob of **taking away** his birthright, when in reality, Esau **sold** his birthright! Jacob had not even taken away the blessing; God had **already** taken it away from Esau before birth (Gen. 25:23). Esau does not really manifest concern that the spiritual aspect of the blessing is gone---only that there is no "blessing" (inheritance) for him. Esau will settle for **any kind of blessing** (27:37-38), a second-blessing, *anything, so long as it is physical*. Esau wept like a baby (27:38). The patriarchal blessing which passed on spiritual leadership---the Messianic family lineage---could not be revoked. It was under divine protection. God saw to it that it was given to only those qualified by faith and commitment to it. Once Isaac had given it to Jacob, he could not give it to Esau. Isaac suddenly knew that his attempt to give it to Esau was wrong, and that giving it to Jacob was right, and he would not attempt to disobey God---**twice**. While Esau was bitterly disappointed he did not get the "blessing" he did not change his attitude or his ways. If someone takes something you believe to be yours, you want him to be more than sorry---you want him to make restitution, if possible, but certainly you want him to act differently toward you in the future. God wants the same thing from sinners---**true repentance**. Isaac truly repented and gave a confirming blessing to Jacob. Esau could find no place of "repentance" (i.e., change of mind in Isaac) concerning the blessing (Heb. 11:17) because God's spiritual blessing cannot be given to anyone who does not really want it. Jacob and Esau both got what they **really** wanted. Jacob wanted the spiritual blessing above every thing else---even if it meant leaving home without any *material* possessions at all. Esau wanted a material future even if it meant *selling* the spiritual birthright, or murdering his brother. Those who *renounce* this world and follow God's way to the next world, by faith and obedience are Israelites, sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whether Jew or Gentile. Those who renounce the way of God for the momentary pleasures of flesh are "children" of Esau no matter what nationality they are. Esau was sorry---no doubt about that. But it was a worldly sorrow---not a godly one (see 2 Cor. 7:10f). He was sorry only about the unpleasant circumstances---not convinced he should do God's will.

Isaac **did give Esau a "blessing."** It was a prophecy of Esau's descendants (27:29-40). The Edomites **did live in violence, and in subjection to Israel**, occasionally "shaking" themselves from Israel's yoke, only to be conquered again and again. The Edomites **did remain bitter and envious** as next-door-neighbors of the Israelites (see Obadiah's prophecy), rejoicing and joining in every attack upon Israel. Esau's "blessing" was more of a

“**curse**” than anything. Esau got what he wanted all along. The life of a shepherd was too boring for him---so shall it be with his descendants. Esau did not want to be bothered with a birthright and tied down to carrying on his father’s **spiritual** heritage---so shall it be! Those who were descendants of Esau (the Herods) were inveterate **enemies** of the idea that the Messianic birthright belonged to Jacob’s descendants! They tried every way possible (even to slaying babies in Bethlehem and delivering the innocent Jesus up to be crucified) to keep Jacob’s descendants from having the Messianic blessing!

Esau **hated** Jacob with a blind rage! Not because Esau wanted the spiritual birthright---he wanted the material benefits that went with it. Jacob had to leave home with only the “spiritual birthright” and without any of the immediate benefits of Isaac’s wealth! Jacob had to make it on his own. Esau plotted in his heart to **murder** his brother! But Rebekah had a plan to save Jacob. Isaac told Jacob to go to **Paddan-aram** (means, “The Plain of Aram”---which is the upper Mesopotamian valley or Haran---today it is Syria), to the house of Jacob’s maternal grandfather, Bethuel, and take a wife there. Jacob eventually married two of his cousins, Leah and Rachel. The human race was still young enough that the danger of accumulated mutational defects was minimal. Isaac invokes “the blessing of Abraham” upon Jacob. No doubt now in Isaac’s mind who would carry on **the promise**. Jacob must have a wife sympathetic with and strengthening to the call of God (which could not be found among the Canaanites). Jacob’s job of establishing the tribes of Israel would require development of his character through a long period of forced dependence on **God alone**. Jacob needed to get out of the shelter of his mother’s partiality, he must get away from his brother’s malice, he must “do his own thing.” He must make decisions on his own to establish values and faith strong enough to carry on the Messianic program of God.

Jacob was all alone in territory and circumstances completely foreign to his “sheltered” upbringing. God wanted Jacob to know that he had the company of the Almighty! This was

no ordinary “Highway to Heaven”! The Hebrew word **סִלְעַם**, translated “ladder” is used **only this one time** in the Bible. Some think the word comes from the root word *salal* which means “**highway** or raised way” Isa. 35:8. The Greek word used in the Septuagint to translate *sillem* is or, *klimax* from which we get the English word “climax.” This “climaxing (ascending) highway,” (kinda like “The Yellow Brick Road” in Oz) with angels going up and down it, with God at the “end,” clearly pictured to Jacob the **interrelationships of earth and heaven**. There is **intense interest in heaven** as to what’s going on in the earth! There are multitudes of mighty ministers (**angels**) of God coming down to earth to carry out God’s commands, then to report back to God to receive further assignments (Heb. 1:14; 12:22; Psa. 103:20; Luke 15:10; 16:22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12; Psa. 34:7; 91:11; 2 Kings 6:17; 2 Chron. 18:18; Job. 1:6; 2:1; Dan. 9:21-23; 10:10-13; Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43; Acts 12:11; 27:23; Matt. 18:10). After all the experiences Jacob had endured he probably wondered if heaven (God) even cared about what he was enduring. This revelation gave Jacob the assurance he longed for that God was really there and truly concerned for human redemption. Though earth is separated from heaven and God by what **seems** to us an impassable gulf of space, **a WAY has been built**, or was *being* built, by God to **span this impassable gulf**. THAT “WAY” IS NONE OTHER THAN GOD HIMSELF! Two-thousand years after Jacob’s revelation by dream, **Jesus Christ** claimed that **He, Himself, was Jacob’s “Way.”** (John 1:51; 3:13; 14:6; Eph. 4:8-10). Jacob’s “Way” is not a religious system or a theology, or even a “plan of salvation”---**IT IS A PERSON!** How blessed we are to have had revealed to us the historical reality in Jesus Christ, what was given only in “dream” to Jacob. Now we have his promised Spirit for our companion!



Jacob took his “head rest” (stone) and set it up as a “pillar” to memorialize or mark the place where God spoke to him. “Luz,” which means “Almond Tree,” was named **Bethel** by Jacob (Gen. 35:6)---”Beth-el” means, “House of God.” Jacob wanted to respond to God in some kind of dedication, not only of the altar he built, but, more importantly, of his own life. SO HE MADE A VOW. The Hebrew phrase, *ah-im--yiheyeh elohim ah-immadi*, would be better translated, “**Since** God will be with me....” instead of “**If** God will be with me....” Jacob is not dictating conditions to God upon which Jacob will base his response; Jacob is vowing to dedicate himself to God **because of what God has already done**. Much of the modern day clamor over “miracles, signs, and religious experiences,” etc., is **bargaining with God**. Much of it says, “If God will do a miracle for me---if God will give me a sign---if God will give me a *religious experience*, I will then serve him.” **The only sign or experience a man needs to serve God is to know that God has atoned for his sins in Jesus Christ and that God has raised Jesus from the dead to guarantee the resurrection of all believers**. Jesus’ resurrection is, IN FACT, the **only** sign Jesus himself ever promised to confirm that God **is with us** (Matt. 12:38-39; 16:1-4; Luke 11:29-32). **SINCE GOD HAS RAISED UP JESUS CHRIST, WE OUGHT TO SERVE HIM. WE DON’T NEED ANY OTHER “EXPERIENCE.”**

**GENESIS 29:1---31:55**

We have now come in history to about 500 years after the Flood in Noah's time (1000 yrs. after Noah's birth). God worked all those redemptive 500 years through one small family unit at a time to preserve the clearest truth about himself. *One* family can't have much impact on a whole world which would by this time number in the millions. *One* family can't conquer a land and "possess it for the Lord." So God takes *another step forward* in his redemptive program and prepares to form a "clan" from which he will form a "nation." It was God's plan all along to set one whole nation dedicated to his will, in the **midst** of all the nations (Ezek. 5:5) as a **testimony** of his truth (Deut. 4:6) for all who would be willing to learn it. Jacob proved that he was the **man** for "such a time as this." But Jacob can't form a "clan" yet because he isn't even married! He must also learn how to have patience and how to prosper so he may pass on that to his "clan" if they, in turn, are to produce a "nation." God works through human beings, in their circumstances, to redeem them! Welllll, Jacob just happened to come upon some "shepherds" in the "land of the people of the East" (Haran at the head of the Mesopotamian Valley). He asked about his uncle Laban (as his father had told him to do Gen. 27:43-45; 28:1-5)---the shepherds point to Rachel coming to water Laban's sheep. **Rachel was pretty!** Beauty, of course, is *always* in the eye of the beholder. Jacob wanted to be alone with Rachel but the shepherds wouldn't leave. When Jacob got a better look at Rachel, he rolled away the stone covering to the well which would have normally taken more than one man to accomplish (the stone was "large" 29:2). He was "hooked." Rachel was a *beautiful* woman (Gen. 29:17). Jacob's embrace ("kiss") was probably **not** one like the "passion" of Hollywood or TV but one of the customary "greetings" of the Middle-East. He was enthused that he had arrived among "family" and found a "cousin" who was **a beautiful, little dark-eyed Mesopotamian (Syrian)**. Rachel "rushed" back to tell her father, and Laban came running and "kissed" (embraced) his **nephew**. The fact that Rachel had demonstrated great *courage, responsibility* and *industriousness*, all alone, herding her father's sheep may also have attracted Jacob to her.

Jacob worked for his uncle for a month probably among the flocks so he could be close to Rachel. Laban, recognizing the possibilities of obtaining such an industrious young man as a son-in-law, offered to hire Jacob. Jacob knew what he wanted as wages, and was willing to work **seven** years for it---he wanted **Rachel** for a wife. Laban had two daughters of marriageable age. Leah was the oldest. Custom forbade the younger daughter to be married before the elder one (29:26). Rachel, however, was more to the liking of Jacob. Leah had "soft eyes" (probably meaning "weak"). Leah may have been more reserved and introspective than the "outdoor" dark-eyed beauty, Rachel. Laban pretended to agree to Jacob's wish for receiving Rachel as his payment. But he tricked Jacob by taking Leah, veiled from head to foot, to Jacob's tent for the wedding night. She may have been clothed in Rachel's clothing. The two sisters were probably enough alike, and Jacob may have over imbibed of wedding festivities, and the conversations in the bed would be whispered and Jacob awoke to find Leah in his wedding bed! Marriage was, and is, much more sacred in Middle-East culture than in Western culture. Even in modern Judaism: "According to Jewish law, marriage is obligatory for men. A man is duty bound to marry and have children...it is expected that the Jewish community will help find husbands for unmarried women..." from *Living Jewish*, p. 47, by Asheri. **Divorce** is much more **cruel** than polygamy! At least in polygamous situations the wives and children are cared for, loved, fed, disciplined, and **not** deprived of parenthood like today's America! Do not forget, either, that God legislated the Levirate law (where the brother is obligated to marry a deceased brother's widow). The

culture of that region was, and still is, almost totally agricultural and tribal. Unless one had many, many children and wives, he could not have much of a herd or a farm. Furthermore, he would not be able to protect himself against a tribal kind of existence, nor would he have had any social security for his old age except children and wives (see Psa. 127:3; 128:3; 113:9; Prov. 17:6; Psa. 128:6; Prov. 31:10-31, etc.). Clearly the kind of polygamy Jacob engaged in is strictly prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:18). God could have given Jacob all the sons he needed to fulfill God's purpose for forming a "clan" through **one wife**, had Jacob maintained his faith on the highest level, but Jacob didn't. Since that was the best Jacob could do, or at least, did, God used it and "overlooked" it (Mt. 19:3-12; Acts 17:30; **Rom. 3:21-26**; 9:22) because Jacob's faith was better than anything else God had to use in humanity at that time! God atoned for Jacob's failure in Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:15), the same as he atones for our failures! **WHAT A GRAPHIC LESSON THESE PATRIARCHS ARE THAT GOD'S REDEMPTION IS BY GRACE THROUGH A FLAWED FAITH!**

In modern Jewish practice, theoretically, the Sephardim (the division of Judaism most likely to be **real** descendants of Biblical Jews and who inhabit the Mediterranean and Spanish coastlands) may have two wives. The Ashkenazim (the division of Judaism descended from the Khazars---ancient Russians---and who inhabit Europe and the Americas) are **bound to observe monogamy**. Although marriages are frequently arranged today, particularly in Oriental and extreme Orthodox communities, no woman or man may be married without freely giving consent, nor may he or she in any way be coerced to give such consent, *Living Jewish, op.cit.* Jacob was **partial** toward **Rachel**. Leah was slighted. This is why polygamy brings trouble! But the Lord blessed Leah and opened her womb to productiveness while he closed the womb of Rachel to barrenness. When Jacob realized this he spent more time with Leah who had four sons in succession---Rueben (meaning, "See, a son"); Simeon (from *shema*, "she is heard"); Levi (meaning, "joined"---Jacob will not be joined to Leah); and Judah (Leah will be "praised"). Jacob did, indeed, learn to love Leah as his wife and cherish her for producing sons for him. Rachel could see she was losing part of the attention Jacob paid to her as the loveliest. Barrenness was a "shameful" thing in that culture. She began to resent and envy her sister, Leah. She pestered and nagged and made Jacob's time with her a constant time of trouble, agitation and bickering (see what Solomon wrote about a nagging wife---Prov. 19:13; 21:9, etc.). Rachel blamed Jacob for her inability to bear children. Jacob struck back angrily that perhaps there was something wrong in her life or God would not have withheld children from her---it wasn't his fault! Rachel resorted to her great-aunt Sarah's solution---she gave Jacob her handmaiden so that she, Rachel, might have "legal" children by her husband. This was socially acceptable and practiced quite often---although it was **not God's plan from the beginning** (Matt. 19:1ff). Two of Jacob's sons (two of the 12 tribes of Israel) were by Bilhah, the servant of Rachel---they were Dan ("judging") and Naphtali ("wrestlings"). Leah was not ready to give up on the contest. She *gave her handmaiden* (Zilpah) to Jacob who bore him two more sons: Gad ("fortunate") and Asher ("happy:"). Our culture today is so different, and Christian teaching so much higher, it is difficult for us to understand the attitude of mind which would give Leah and Rachel vicarious satisfaction when their husband would have sexual relations with their maids. Polygamy is short of God's desire for marriage among human beings (Gen. 1:24; Matt. 19:3-9; 1 Thess. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 3:2, etc.) and is fraught with many distresses and sinful consequences (examples, Robert Owen and his followers; Brigham Young and his followers). **Jealousy** between polygamous spouses and children is often so malicious it causes murder. There is no excuse for the practice of the patriarchs except that they simply lacked the faith to obey God's original order in the garden of Eden. God, however, "passed over" these "former sins" (Rom. 3:25; Acts 14:16; 17:30) and used men on lower levels of morality because of the hardness of their hearts---not because of God's weakness---until he could insist upon the **ideal sanctions of**

**human marriage (one man and one woman for life)** due to the redemptive power of the Cross of Christ. Polygamy was definitely not the ideal, but it was mitigated somewhat by even **more cruel** treatment of the marriage vows by people more sinful than the patriarchs.

Jacob now had 8 sons. Reuben, the eldest, was probably about 7 or 8 yrs. old. He was out playing at harvest time, and found **mandrakes**. A “mandrake” is a small orange-colored, berry-like fruit, considered to be an *aphrodisiac* and an inducer of *fertility*. It has been called the “love-apple” or sometimes, the “May-apple.” It has also been used as a narcotic or an emetic to cause vomiting. Reuben brought them to his mother, Leah. An argument ensued. Rachel wanted some of the “mandrakes” hoping to use them for help to get Jacob back to her bed and perhaps she might have children of her own. Leah, jealously refused to part with any of the mandrakes to Rachel. Rachel strikes a bargain which must have grated against her soul. She agreed to “sell” Jacob to Leah that night for Leah’s bed in exchange for some of the mandrakes. Jacob gladly went in to Leah’s bed that night. Perhaps he did it only to keep peace. Perhaps he was flattered by this contest between these sisters for his affections. Jacob had shown real affection for Leah only after she had borne him his first four sons. Even the two sons by her maid had not gained her the total affection of Jacob---Jacob had turned toward Rachel, his first love. Leah earnestly prayed to the Lord for more children of her own. The Lord answered with Issachar (“hire, reward”) and Zebulun (“dwelling with her”). The score thus far, 10 sons total; 6 from Leah, 2 from Bilhah (Rachel’s maid), 2 from Zilpah (Leah’s maid)---8 to 2 in favor of Leah!---plus 1 daughter, Dinah, by Leah. Later, Jacob had other daughters (Gen. 37:35; 46:7,15). **Finally**, but not due to the “mandrakes” which Rachel had eaten many years earlier, the Lord “opened” Rachel’s womb and she bore children for Jacob of her very own. **Joseph** (“taken away reproach” and “may he add”) and **Benjamin** (“son of the right hand”) (Gen. 35:16-18).

Jacob worked for Laban for 20 years. Jacob courteously asked Laban’s permission to leave for his homeland with his wives and children. **Note: Jacob requested no property to take with him though ethically he could have claimed some pay for 6 or 7 years he worked beyond the 14 to get his two wives.** Laban wanted to keep Jacob there working for him so he said, “Name your wages...” A SECOND TIME JACOB SAID, “YOU SHALL NOT GIVE ME ANYTHING...” Jacob said he would stay on and work for Laban longer tending Laban’s flocks, only Laban should **pay him as wages for work done** the few living sheep and cattle which were speckled and striped. **Note: Jacob’s absolute insistence on honesty!** He would take for earned wages ONLY the PRESENT speckled and striped animals, not use them for cross breeding with the rest of Laban’s flock, they would be removed from the flock of solid colored goats so they might not cross-breed---and if any solid-colored animals **did** appear among Jacob’s spotted, they would be given to Laban as belonging to him. JACOB WAS **NOT** A DECEITFUL, DISHONEST MAN! He was no freeloader! He worked hard, efficiently and honestly for his uncle Laban. He deserved to be paid wages (Laban wanted to make his “pay” look like a “gift”). There is nothing unholy about **work** or receiving **remuneration** for work! God approves of diligence, efficiency, advancement and prosperity---so long as that does not take God’s place in the affections and so long as the prosperity is not from illegal, ungodly means or methods. Work may become idolatry when it consumes one’s entire energies. On the other hand, idleness and slothfulness is rebellion against God (Eph. 6:5-9 Col. 3:22-25; 1 Thess. 4:11-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-15, and the many Proverbs which speak to idleness and slothfulness). God approves of wisdom and prudence by Christians in the work of the kingdom. We should exert as much wisdom in doing God’s work as we do our everyday business affairs (Luke 16:1-15). Remember, not all work is the same. Some work requires mostly physical exertion---some work requires mostly mental exertion---some could require both---but it is all **work**, and if done diligently and honestly it is worthy of wages!

Jacob is often accused of using *unscientific, pagan, superstition* by peeling rods and placing them before the animals. Would a man who had herded sheep and cattle some 80 years be taken in by superstition? Modern science **does not, by any stretch of the imagination, KNOW EXACTLY what it is that determines the actual characteristics any living thing may have.** There are literally BILLIONS of potential characteristics that are theoretically available in the gene-pool of every living thing. Jacob knew a great deal about sheep, goats and cattle--more than Laban knew. As a very observant and intelligent man, Jacob had apparently learned something of what we now call **Mendelian genetics**. By long years of observation of mating and reproduction he learned that after numbers of generations of inbreeding, even solid-colored animals will reproduce multi-marked or colored offspring. He learned by experience what every farmer knows, that even though certain cattle may have certain **dominant** traits (color, etc.) There are, in each generation, certain offspring that manifest one or more **recessive** traits. It is highly unlikely that peeled tree limbs could prenatally transmit images of stripes and spots to signal DNA structures, but, **it is possible that certain chemicals oozing from the peeled rods into the water** (where the rods had actually been stuck) **and being drunk by the animals, could affect the DNA structures in the animals.** It is also possible that the "rods" caused some erotic stimulation and aroused the procreative instinct in the animals. The Hebrew word *chom* means primarily "to come into heat." This being so, the sentences in Gen. 30:38,41 might be translated, "And he set the rods...that they should become **hot (or "in heat")** when they came to drink." Even what human beings **see** may cause certain physiological mechanisms in the body---blushing, some nausea and erotic stimulations are caused by visual sense. In some way not understood, but confirmed by numerous husbandry experts, the sight of white-streaked rods seems to stimulate these animals to procreate. This is most likely what Jacob had in mind---to speed up the reproduction process and thus increase the probability for hereditary variations. He knew, from experience, the more reproduction, statistically **his** chances for more speckled animals was better.

Jacob decided to leave Haran because of the **false charges** brought against him by Laban's sons and the increasing animosity of Laban toward Jacob. He had made a contract with Laban to keep his flocks and was a man of integrity, so he was reluctant to break the contract. BUT GOD COULD COMMAND HIM TO LEAVE BECAUSE GOD KNEW LABAN'S HEART! Jacob explained his decision to leave Haran to Rachel and Leah by revealing the trouble between him and Laban. He told them of God's command; of Laban's deceitfulness and injustice, and testified of God's providence toward himself. It was revealed to Jacob in a dream that God had been working providentially in the intelligent procedures Jacob had been taking to increase his "holdings." God showed Jacob just how these **Mendelian variations CAME ABOUT.** The actual animals that mated **were not speckled, but all solid and belonged to Laban.** The dream showed these solid-colored to be heterozygous (pronounced *hetero Zigus*). That is, they contained genes for both members of at least one pair of Mendelian characters. Laban's solid-colored animals were carrying the particular genes for streaks, spots, and speckles, even though they were all solid-colored! GOD COULD SEE INTO THE GENETIC STRUCTURE, although Jacob could only "guess" from past experience. God knew **which** animals were that way. Jacob had no way of knowing with any precision at all---nor did Jacob have any way of controlling them. Jacob could start the process---GOD KNEW WHICH GOATS HAD THE RIGHT GENES AND HAD CONTROL OVER THEM. Jacob's share of the flock increased in a **miraculous way**---many more goats and more rapidly than if "nature" were left to itself. God also revealed he was giving Laban some divine justice because of what Laban was trying to do to Jacob. Leah and Rachel not only agree with Jacob that he must leave, they "chip in" some grievances of their own! Laban treated his own flesh and blood like foreigners. He "sold" his daughters like he would his



animals. He had been using up their “doweries’ for himself.. What Jacob has, God gave him. What Jacob has really belongs to them rightfully. And, whatever God has commanded Jacob, the wives are willing to do also.

Jacob angrily defended his honor. His anger is **righteous indignation** at the hypocrisy of Laban and the false accusations he brought against him.

Jacob allowed a search and challenged Laban to set out evidence that anything had been stolen from him;

Jacob reminded Laban of his 20 years of faithful service in Laban’s flocks;

Jacob reminded Laban that his work was so diligent and expert that none of Laban’s animals had been lost through miscarriage; a frequent occurrence under less diligent shepherds;

Jacob reminded Laban that he had not taken any of Laban’s animals for food for himself;

Jacob pointed out that he had borne the losses to Laban’s flocks out of his own flocks, for any of Laban’s which had been destroyed or damaged by wild animal attack;

Jacob reminded Laban that he had served diligently and willingly through the most trying circumstances---day and night, through heat and cold, deprived of sleep and rest and food.

Finally, Jacob reminded Laban that the Lord God had been involved in his prosperity and Laban’s rebuke.

Jacob was an honest man. He had never bragged to Laban about the good he had done for his uncle. He never even demanded any reimbursement or wages. He looked out for his uncle’s flocks as if they had been his own. When it came time to defend his personal integrity against false accusations, he could honestly and forthrightly do so! “The truth will out” is a proven principle. Truth will always expose and be victorious over hypocrisy and falsehood---IN GOD’S OWN GOOD TIME. It may take awhile for truth to “win” but it SHALL. It is not easy to live an honest life. It requires deep and abiding faith in God’s promises and a surrender to his divine direction in life (from the Bible); but it is always worth it. Everything Jacob had to suffer in inconvenience to remain honest was repaid him when his name was vindicated before his wives, his children, and all the others there that day! One father or husband who is honest, fair, loving and diligent, is worth all the others who are only rich in “things”

Have you noticed the often repeated emphasis in the lives of the Patriarchs on the fact that **God’s people must be separate from the worldly-minded**? Jacob’s separation from Laban is another instance of it. First, Jacob knew that the call of God to the Messianic destiny demanded it because God had simply **commanded it**. Second, Jacob knew that rearing his children in the materialistic, deceitful, idolatrous environment of their grandfather’s home would never do. Some have accused Jacob of mercenary reasons for leaving Laban’s home. But if all Jacob was after was financial success, he would have stayed there. He was really prospering there. **Jacob’s concerns were spiritual. That is where his priorities were---so that is where he went and took his family with him!**

**GENESIS 32:1—36:43**

The closer Jacob got to Canaan, the more he remembered the estrangement between himself and his brother Esau. Esau had threatened to kill Jacob on sight! Approaching the land where Esau lived (east of the Jordan River) Jacob sent emissaries 100 miles ahead of his caravan to sue for peace with his angry brother. Esau is to be told, that Jacob has all the property he wants so he is not coming back to challenge Esau for what he has. Esau was frightened that Jacob might want to do battle for the land of Edom promised to him, so Esau assembled an army of 400 men. Splitting his caravan in two hoping to save at least half his people, Jacob has done all he can do except offer the present which he will do later (Gen. 32:20). Jacob now turns the crisis over to the Lord by praying. Jacob, trying his best to bring about a reconciliation, decided to send gifts to Esau. The Hebrew word *kopher* in Gen. 32:20 is translated “**appease**” (RSV & KJV, but “pacify” in NIV) and means literally, “cover his face with a gift”—it is often translated “**atone or wash away**” in the OT. It is a word used in the law of Moses to describe offerings of atonement (Ex. 30:12; Lev. 16:32; Num. 35:31-32). It is also translated “ransom.” In the New Testament the Greek word *exilasomi* is translated “atonement” and is also used to describe the “mercy seat” above the Ark of the Covenant (Heb. 9:5). Jacob’s gifts to Esau were not bribes! They were offered as expressions of reconciliation, good-will, good faith and as an **atonement** for any wrong Esau may have held against Jacob. Actually, Jacob had not wronged Esau. Esau had no use for the spiritual leadership or promises—he profaned it. Jacob wanted none of Esau’s physical inheritance. Jacob had earned his own way at his uncle Laban’s goat ranch. Jacob wanted peace and he wanted his brothers’ appeasement. Jacob *could have* held grudges against Esau as the cause for his exile in Haran and all the hard work he had to do there to get wives and property. But he didn’t! **JACOB’S ACTIONS ARE THOSE OF A GOD-FEARING, LOVING MAN!**

Jacob wrestled with a “man.” Hosea says it was an “angel” (Hos. 12:4). Jacob thought he had seen God “face to face” but God cannot be seen by sinful humans “face to face” (Ex. 33:23; 1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18) unless they have been totally cleansed by the blood of Christ before going into his presence. Jacob, then, wrestled with “the angel of the Lord (see Judges 6:22; 13:21-22; Isa. 6:1-5, etc.). It seems contrary to the teaching of the NT (John 1:1-18; Col. 1:19, 2:9) that God ever veiled himself in human flesh until he came to earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. God’s angels, however, caused humans all through the Bible to fear *as if* they had seen God (Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Nebucadnezzar, John on the island of Patmos). It was essential that Jacob understand and be assured of the **supreme importance** of his destiny and his relationship to Jehovah-God. He must learn clearly that God is all-sufficient, that God has been preparing him through years of testing (“wrestling” as it were with God and men). **He must also learn well his own human weakness!** So the angel touched him on his thigh and crippled him. He was crippled the remainder of his life. He must know that God’s power “is made perfect in weakness and that God’s grace is sufficient” for any human being (2 Cor. 12:8-10). All he is to achieve

for God will be the result of God's grace toward him. The Jews (Gen. 32:32) from that day forward (although it is not mentioned anywhere but Gen. 32:32) refrained from eating the portion of the hind-quarter of animals containing the sciatic nerve. Slaughtered animals for modern Jews must have the "sciatic-nerve" section of the hindquarter, along with certain parts of fat around kidneys and other organs, removed in order for the meat to be pronounced "kosher." In fact, in the U.S. only the forequarter is sold to orthodox Jews, the hindquarter going to non-Jewish meat markets. Josephus mentions the practice in his *Antiquities*, *Bk. I, ch. 20, sec. 2*.

The angel of Jehovah gave Jacob a new name—**Israel**. That is from two Hebrew words, sar and el. *Sar* means "prince" and *el* is often extended to *elohim* which means "God." Thus, "prince of God." God called Jacob to this great partnership in the divine work of redemption because Jacob was a **champion**. God wants every Christian to be a winner and a "prince" because he calls his Church "Israel" in the NT (Gal. 6:16; Rom. 9:6-8; Phil. 3:3). Paul urged Christians to "box" and fight as champions—to run the race and win. Being a "prince of God" puts one in a life-and-death struggle—it is a daily contest. We must win every day! We cannot ever let up, get discouraged and defeated. We must not surrender. Christianity is a "violent" spiritual war in the "inner man" (Lk. 16:16; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 Pet. 2:11; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20; Rom. 6:12-19; 8:1-39). Being a Christian is not "fun and games"—it is not a "spectator sport." If we are crowned "princes of God, as all in the New Israel are, we ought to walk worthily of the calling of **royalty**! We are joint heirs with the King (Christ); we have been called to reign with him, NOW! Let us therefore conduct ourselves with dignity, integrity, humility, benevolence and the spiritual leadership which befits spiritual **champions**.

When Esau saw that Jacob meant him no harm he and Jacob embraced and wept at their reunion. Jacob had been gone at least 20 years. They were twins and the only children in Isaac's family. But being carried away with the natural feelings of brotherly affection does not mean that Esau had thoroughly repented of his attitude toward his family's **spiritual destiny**. Now that Esau has prospered, has become an Arabian sheikh, and grown older and mellow, now that Jacob has also prospered and does not appear to be interested in what Esau had, Esau could let bygones be bygones. But the hope that Esau was taking a new attitude toward the God Jacob worshiped is not indicated. It certainly appears to be the contrary when one considers the subsequent history of Esau's descendants, the **Edomites**, who consistently worshiped idols and constantly harassed and abused the Israelites. The very fact that Esau *insisted* that Jacob follow him to Seir may have been from ulterior motives in Esau. The civility of worldly-minded people toward Christians does not necessarily mean they have repented toward God's spiritual demands on their lives—nor does it mean they have heartfelt **love** toward Christians. Subscribing to the "brotherhood-of-man" philosophy does not necessarily mean those who do so subscribe to "the Fatherhood of Jehovah-God" and they certainly do not subscribe to the deity of Jesus Christ. In other words, spouting "human brotherliness" may be nothing more than unbelieving humanism propagated for pragmatic and self-centered reasons.

Here in Genesis 33 the long and fascinating story of Jacob and Esau comes to its

end. Their descendants carry on the struggle of Messianic destiny as opposed to worldly profanity. Esau offers to give Jacob protection if Jacob will follow him to Seir. Jacob begs to be excused, twice, so Esau finally decides to return to the mountains of Seir, expecting Jacob to journey that way by himself, since Jacob had said he was going in that direction (Gen. 33:14). But Jacob never intended to go to Seir—he went to **Succoth** (this is the Hebrew word for “booth, tabernacle, temporary dwelling place”). Jacob had learned well the lesson that God’s spiritual “prince” and God’s redemptive people must remain separate and independent from all worldly-minded, idolatrous associations. He knew how easily people might become attached to idols (e.g. Rachel who brought her family idols with her from Haran). Jacob knew that those who did not sympathize with his faith in God (e.g. Laban) would cause trouble for him. It was pleasant to find his brother Esau outwardly peaceable, but Jacob knew the call of God demanded SEPARATION FROM WORLDLINESS.

Dinah was about 13-14 years of age. Having no sisters of her own, she went seeking female companionship among the women at Shechem. Shechem, son of the Hivite sheikh Hamor, “seized” her, “lay” with her and “humbled” her. **He raped her!** The Hebrew word *ainnah* means literally, “afflict” and indicates Shechem raped and abused Dinah. Dinah should have known that Egyptian and Canaanite men regarded unmarried women abroad in the land as vulnerable **prey** (Gen. 12:15; 20:2; 26:7). **She should not have gone visiting Canaanite women unattended.** She may even have flirted with Shechem. Sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion was a common thing among the Canaanites. It was a part of the religious system practiced by these people. The text says “Shechem loved Dinah,” but what kind of “love” rapes and abuses a woman? He *did* take her to his father and ask to marry her (34:26). Hamor was apparently unconcerned about the rapacious, abusive way Shechem treated Dinah. He did not rebuke Shechem; he did not apologize for his son’s actions either to Dinah or her family. Dinah, reared in a home with 11 brothers and no sisters, probably felt starved for female companionship her own age. But tragically she chose to “run with” girls from pagan backgrounds. Shortly thereafter she was raped by one of the boys of the same social set. It brought disgrace to her father, and aroused the implacable hatred of her brothers which resulted in murder and bloodshed and further shame upon her family. But the most serious consequence was the shame it brought to the God her family professed to worship and serve. **Choose your companions wisely, Christians!**

Dinah’s brothers were in a **red-rage!** Shechem had wrought “folly” in Israel. The Hebrew word *nevalah* may be translated, “worthlessness.” It is used in the OT to describe crimes or sins which mock and violate the dignity and destiny of Israel as the people of God (Deut. 22:21; Judg. 20:10; 2 Sam. 13:12; Josh. 7:15; Isa. 9:17; Jer. 23:13). It describes crimes that make Israelites look like heathen. In that culture it was customary that a brother was dishonored more by the seduction of his sister than by the infidelity of his wife. His wife could divorce. A sister is forever a sister. **Jacob should have taken charge of the situation.** But he allowed his sons to do all the talking. While Hamor and Shechem made their proposition, Dinah’s brothers were devising a plan of revenge which would involve blasphemy and murder. They slyly pretended that the only problem was a religious one—they would not give their sister

to an *uncircumcised* Canannite. So, all the men of the city of Shechem were circumcised. The sons of Jacob then slew Hamor and Shechem, plundered their cities, took all their property, wives and children as slaves. Jacob's main concerns were his **reputation and retaliation**. He said to his sons, "You have troubled me to make me **stink** among the land's inhabitants (the Hebrew word *baash* means, "cause to rot, leave a rotten smell or taste") and if the Canaanites gather all their people together they will come down upon my tribe and destroy it." Jacob, on his death-bed, pronounced a "curse" upon Simeon and Levi for what they did (Gen. 49:5-7). His sons were cursed for offering the sign of God's covenant to a heathen people; for using that sanctified sign for human ends; and for using it as a trap to murder people. One of the great spiritual failures of Jacob was abdicating his leadership so that his sons took over and murderously retaliated and forfeited their future fitness for leadership and brought shame upon the family and Jehovah. One of the great tragedies of the modern society is families where parents abdicate leadership and let their children do the bossing and demanding in the family. Children are to **obey and respect their parents in the Lord** as long as they have parents. A child who is allowed to impose its will in opposition to the will of its parents is a **RUINED CHILD!** A parent who does not have the courage, patience, strength and wisdom to make his child obey and submit to what is right and proper is not following God's will and is destroying the child!

The "foreign gods" in Jacob's family were the ones Rachel "stole" from her father, Laban (Gen. 31:19-35). Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them, and Laban did not find them. Jacob later discovered that there were foreign "household gods" (Heb. *Teraphim*) among his people. Rachel may have taken them because she was still emotionally attached to the old idolatry practiced by her family, or, they represented some symbolic, legal rights she possessed as a daughter of Laban and were part of her "dowry." Or, perhaps she believed they would "protect" the whole group on the long (500 mile) journey. When Laban first accused Jacob of "taking" them, Jacob allowed Laban to search his people and declared anyone found with them would be put to death! But Rachel outfoxed her father and Jacob. God may have revealed to Jacob the presence of "foreign gods" in his entourage or Jacob may have learned it himself. Whatever the case, Jacob ordered his people, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments." He would take his people to Bethel (the "house of God") and make an altar to Jehovah ("covenant-keeping God"). Probably the traumatic experience Jacob's family had just faced with the immoral, idolatrous Canaanites at Shechem caused them to repent of their attachment to "foreign gods" and they got rid of them. Then they "washed (Heb. *taher*) and purified" themselves and Jacob "buried" the *Teraphim* under the "oak" (actually, *terebinth*) tree that he may have known was there from walking there with his grandfather, Abraham, many years before this (Gen. 12:6). **This is a true and classic example of what REPENTANCE means!** It involves "putting away" un-Biblical practices and things opposed to God's revealed will (see Eph. Chs. 4 through 6; and Col. Chs. 3-4, etc.). Repentance involves obedience to whatever God commands for purification (in the NT purification *initially* accomplished by baptism (immersion in water). After baptism it is accomplished by praying for forgiveness and taking measures that such a sin is not *willingly* repeated. Would it be



too much to ask of modern followers of Christ that they throw away anything that decreases their loyalty to Jesus? **Anything** that puts Jesus second is **idolatry**—even ungodly clothing, behavior, thinking, associations, or information. If we are “princes” and “princesses” of Almighty God, it is not fitting that we collect or wear anything that would associate us with that which God opposes! Find out what he opposes by reading his word!

It is noteworthy that Esau and Jacob were still in a “brotherly” relationship 25 years after Jacob had come back to Canaan. They came together to participate in their father’s funeral. Jacob and Esau were about 120 years old when Isaac died. Esau had been married 80 years, Jacob only 40! Esau realized the land of Canaan would not be sufficient to support the ever increasing tribes of both brothers. The section of Genesis 25:19—37:2 seems to be the section collected and preserved by Jacob. He probably wrote this history down. Moses later collected all these sections and edited them. Jacob wanted to complete his life’s history with a notation about the family of his twin brother, Esau. Esau’s record indicates that through intermarriage with the inhabitants of Seir his descendants were the Edomites—a mixture of Semitic and Canaanitic lineages (today’s Arabs). Edomites are called “brothers” of the Israelites in the book of Obadiah. Esau got what he wanted all along—a shiekdom—a whole “land” with wives, flocks and herds, and many descendants. Many of his descendants were “chiefs” (Heb. *alluphyehem*) and “kings” (Heb. *milakiym*) long before any of Jacob’s descendants were. The later history of the Edomites records them as being **implacable enemies** of the Israelites—warring against them, seducing them into idolatry, and joining with anyone who would persecute the Israelites. Edomites, as such, disappeared from the territory of Seir, and their descendants probably became the Nabateans and other Arabians who inhabited the Negev (the southern most part of Palestine) who produced the Herod family! What a heritage Esau gave to the world! The Herods were even more profane and violent than Esau!

**GENESIS 37:1----40:23**

From here to the end of Genesis, we will have the history of **Joseph**. All others take a supporting role to **Joseph**. God never appeared to Joseph, the covenant promises were never given to him in any special revelation; in fact, of the sons of Jacob it was *Judah (not even Jacob's first born)*, and not Joseph, through whom God would fulfill the lineal birth of the Messiah! But Joseph's role is to save the clan of Jacob from starvation so it can fulfill its Messianic destiny. I think Joseph's personal character, though morally pure, was marred by spiritual pride to a degree which his brothers found impossible to tolerate. Joseph was only 17 years of age when his father had apparently placed him in charge of the shepherding (all his brothers except Benjamin were older than he). Note **(a)** he was a "tattle-tale"—there was no indication that Jacob ordered Joseph to spy and report on his brothers—Joseph simply offered it **presuming** that since he was placed in charge it was part of **his job** to report any misbehavior on their part; **(b)** his *passim* "long robe with sleeves" is **not** indicated to be one of "many colors" and there is no reason from the Hebrew text to so describe it, however, the uniqueness of the coat (probably longer and finer-woven) indicated to his brothers that their father "favored" him and wished him to have leadership over them—Jacob's "favoritism" caused his brothers to hate him and they refused to "peacefully" (Heb. *shalom*) act toward him—anything they said to him would be antagonistic and malicious.

Did Joseph's **first** dream of the "sheaves" come by divine revelation"? The Scriptures do not say, however, since it came to pass in **fact** (when the family fled to Egypt to avoid starvation) we assume it did. His eagerness to tell it indicated to his brothers that he was glorying in and dreaming about **his pre-eminence** among them! Joseph's **second** dream pictured even his father and mother "bowing down to him." Even his father rebuked him for telling this dream! But even if the dream came from God, Joseph was **foolish and arrogant** to tell it. **God** gave Joseph no instructions to tell either of these dreams to family! His brothers became extremely envious and hateful, and his father and mother were displeased with him. It is wrong for Christians to be envious or jealous (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20). But what about **provoking** others to envy and jealousy? Gal. 5:26; James 3:14-16. Wherever there is pride and inordinate ambition and boasting, there is **provocation** to envy. The disciples of Jesus argued about who would be greatest in the kingdom and provoked one another to jealousy. An elder is "not to be a novice" lest he fall into the sin of pride—thus provoking envy and jealousy and hatred in others. Joseph's pride (prodded by his father's partiality) provoked his brother's murderous hatred. **ALL WERE AT FAULT!** But Joseph's arrogance did not excuse the hatred of his brothers! We overcome the pride which provokes others to envy only when we acknowledge that all we are and hope to be is **only by the grace of God**.

Reuben, the eldest brother, rescued Joseph from death. Reuben had lost his right to the birthright by his incestuous relationship with one of Jacob's wives. Apparently, he was now trying to exercise the moral leadership of the clan which he should have

assumed earlier. Years later, Joseph indicated he remembered Reuben's mercy for him when Joseph held Simeon (next oldest) hostage instead of Reuben (the eldest) (Gen. 42:18-25). Reuben also prevented his brothers from violating the specific command of God against "shedding blood" (Gen. 9:6). After Joseph had been sold into Egyptian slavery, Reuben returned and was **shocked** (Gen. 37:29) to find Joseph gone and did the customary thing of that culture to exhibit anger, sadness or regret. He knew he would be held accountable to his father, Jacob, for the disappearance of the "favored" son. If Reuben had been **penitent** he would have told his father, Jacob, the truth when the others lied and said that Joseph had been slain by a wild beast. But Reuben didn't! He probably regretted Joseph's fate, but he didn't step forward with the integrity of an elder son. **INTEGRITY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES (i.e., STANDING FOR TRUTH AND MORALITY) IS NOT AN EASY VIRTUE TO ACQUIRE! BUT IT MAY BE ACQUIRED BY FAITH (2 Pet. 1:5-11).** The actions of the brothers sounds exactly like so many of our society today—they wouldn't tell a "bald-faced lie" they would simply let Jacob form his own conclusions from the **false evidence** which is as much a lie as anything!

Judah's first son, Er (meaning, "watcher") was so wicked God couldn't tolerate him, so God slew him. Er produced no children by his wife Tamar. Er, probably inspired by his Canaanite mother, would be addicted to all the abominable vices of the Canaanites. Perhaps Judah was intent upon having a male heir through Er to perpetuate the "spiritual" Messianic destiny, and Er may have blasphemously profaned it, like Esau. Whatever the case, the **Levirate law** (from Latin *levir* meaning, "a husband's brother" or "brother-in-law"—there is no word in the Hebrew language for "Levirate") was already a common part of the civil code of the nations long before Moses (Gen. 38:8; Deut. 25:5-10; Ruth 4:1-17—these do not contradict Lev. 18:15;20:21, where the participants are all alive). If a man died without children his next younger brother should marry his wife and "raise up seed to his brother." The first son from such a marriage would then be recognized as legal son and heir of the dead brother (Tamar's son by **Onan** would then be heir to the family Messianic birthright as a legal heir through Judah). **Onan** must have been of the same obstinate attitude as his brother Er. Onan especially disliked the idea of fathering a son who would not be his heir. He was probably encouraged by his mother also to resist the Israelite destiny. So, in the act of copulation, Onan withdrew and spilled his seed (semen) on the ground. **Note:** It was the deliberate refusal to produce a child by Tamar through he act of spilling his semen on the ground that caused God to slay him. The term, "onanism" has come to be applied to masturbation; but it is clear that God's judgment was not for either masturbation or for so-called *coitus interruptus*, or for involuntary nocturnal emissions (which, physically speaking, involve the same sexual phenomenon). **God's judgment was for Onan's obstinate refusal to give Tamar an offspring—thus being contemptuous of the Messianic destiny of the tribe of Judah!** The Bible says nothing, specifically, about masturbation, *coitus interruptus*, or birth control measures. As far as sexual practices not explicitly approved or disapproved of in the Bible, they should be evaluated in the light of those **principles** which Scripture sets forth in Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8-9-10, etc. under "doubtful things."

Judah's wife dies. After a period of mourning, Judah re-entered the social life of the community. He decided to go to "sheepshearing" which was a very festive time of the year. Much gaiety and celebrating was associated with it. Tamar heard that Judah was coming to Timnah; she also was agonizingly aware that she had produced no child for the theocratic family and that Selah (Judah's son) had grown up and was apparently not going to be given to her as a **husband**. Tamar, with great daring, disguised herself as a **cult prostitute** (the Hebrew word *kedeshah* is used in Gen. 38:21-22, meaning, "temple priestess" and Canaanite temple priestesses were **prostitutes**). Judah seems to know exactly how to carry on the sordid business of procuring a prostitute from Canaanite paganism. Judah's intentions were undoubtedly to satisfy the human urges of sexuality (he evidently did not want the woman for procreation or worship!). **God's record book does not hide the faults and failures of men----probably in order to make his grace through Christ that much more AMAZING!** Judah stands in the same position as Er and Onan not willing to give Tamar to his son Shelah as wife (according to Levirate law). He is about to thwart the redemptive program of the Lord in the theocratic family succession. The Bible says Judah did not recognize his daughter-in-law, Tamar, but went in to her and had sexual intercourse with her. Tamar gained "pledges" (remuneration) from Judah so he might be positively identified as father of her child. Three months later Judah, righteously indignant that his daughter-in-law has "played the harlot" and is pregnant as a result, demands that she be **burned to death for HER "sin."** *When it is revealed that Judah was the father he confesses his sin (38:26) to be much worse than that of Tamar. He had withheld his son from her in violation of the marriage contract he had made with her family when he obtained her as the wife of his first son Onan.* Judah was as surely in violation of the **Levirate law as was Onan!**

But what are we to say of **Tamar**? (a) she lived in a Canaanite society in which promiscuity was practically a way of life—even religion involved sexual perversion and was considered respectable (*kedeshah*, Heb. meaning, "dedicated"); (b) Judah had broken his promise to give her his son Shelah as her husband—he was, in fact, contrary to the theocratic destiny in doing so; (c) Tamar's motive was **neither lust nor money**, but to continue the theocratic family—which was more than could be said for Judah—and remember Rachel and Jacob's conspiracy against Isaac; (d) the Bible record itself does not specifically condemn her; (e) Tamar did, however, sin against the highest principles of God—she was acting in accordance with the customs and carnal concepts of society, not in accordance with the will of God. (f) But **Tamar had the distinction of being one of the few women whose names are listed in the official genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:3).** Others were Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba (all **flawed**, one way or another). All four of these women were **non-Jews**; all came into the family of Judah and Israel by morally dubious means. Yet in spite of the unsavory past of these women, each one became a strong and faithful believer in God; and God specially blessed them by placing them in the genealogical line of the Messiah! **GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S GRACE!** By his forgiveness and in the power of his truth, human being's crooked and perverse minds and hearts can be straightened out and made fit to serve his redemptive purposes. Joseph, the proud and arrogant; Judah the cowardly and carnal; Jacob the weak and insecure; and Tamar, the

deceitful prostitute, **all needed God's grace!**

Potiphar's wife probably insisted she wanted to have sexual intercourse with Joseph because: **(a)** her husband was probably gone most of the time and her conjugal needs were not being fulfilled; **(b)** she saw Joseph as a "trophy" for her feminine expertise in seducing men; **(c)** she did not think her husband could catch her in the act; **(d)** sexual promiscuity was a common thing in that Egyptian society—including incest; **(e)** she knew Joseph had been reared in the midst of it in Canaan; **(f)** some think Potiphar might have been a eunuch; **(g)** Joseph was virile, proud, "hard-bodied," self-assured, and good-looking—a double "hunk" (Gen. 39:6); **(h)** Joseph was a Hebrew and there is the added thrill of "something new" or the "forbidden fruit" syndrome. **Joseph** could have **rationalized** that this woman could do him favors in high places. There is no doubt that he was **tempted**. Any male would have been tempted. It is no sin to be tempted. The sin occurs when the tempted one **surrenders** to the temptation. **Joseph** was able to resist (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11-13) acknowledging that **(a)** he would not betray the absolute trust of his "employer"; **(b)** he could not violate the will of his gracious God' **(c)** he would not allow himself to "tune in" to her enticements; **(d)** he decided he would not even be near her if he could possibly make it so; **(e)** he **fled and got out of the house** when she began to take his clothes off. This confrontation between Joseph and Potiphar's wife is a classic example illustrating that believers must exercise their own faith and fortitude in resisting temptation. **God did nothing miraculous** to extricate Joseph from the almost overwhelming pressure of temptation facing him. In fact. The result of Joseph's resistance to sin was to **face defamation and imprisonment. Is this how God allows righteous people to be rewarded????** SOMETIMES—YES! It was because God could see Joseph needed the **maturation process** before he became second in Egyptian sovereignty only to the Pharaoh! It is called "**the school of affliction:**" and most of God's greatest servants have gone through it (Moses, David, Paul, C. Y. Kim, J. Russell Morse and his wife, etc., etc.)—see 2 Cor. 1:8-11; 12:7-13, etc.). Jesus never used a miracle to extricate **himself** from temptation! The believer should expect only to call upon his faith in God and God's promises in the Bible to deliver him from temptation. God knows that believers need to bear up under temptation, to bear tests and trials, therefore, believers WILL BE TEMPTED AND TRIED Mt. 18:7)!

Had I been in Joseph's circumstances, I would probably have tried to defend myself against the wife's lies. But how? Joseph had no witnesses—it would be "she said, he said." And which one would Potiphar tend to believe? Potiphar's wrath was kindled when his wife told her lie. But against whom was his wrath kindled? The Bible doesn't precisely say! Perhaps he knew both his wife and Joseph too well to really believe he had heard the whole story! But Joseph made no effort to defend himself—WHY? Maybe Joseph felt sorry for the woman and didn't want to see her suffer (probably death)—choosing rather to suffer himself. Perhaps he knew that the political situation was such that Potiphar would never be able to take a servant's word above that of his wife's anyway—so he might as well remain silent and make the most of an **impossible situation**. As both Jesus and Paul learned, there is not much use trying to reason with or defend oneself against evil people determined to assault the



truth. Joseph's incarceration was not exactly a "country-club" affair like some modern prisons. His feet were put in fetters and his neck in iron (see Psa. 105:15-19). But Joseph endured patiently and God used this experience to put him through the crucible and produce in his character that kind of humble, merciful, forgiving man who could rescue those brothers who had earlier planned to kill him and then sold him into slavery.

I believe Joseph had supernatural power to interpret dreams. Although the text does not say so as it does with Daniel's power to do so. In Genesis 41:16 and 41:25 Joseph seems to be claiming supernatural power. Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of the "butler" and "baker" came to pass **exactly as Joseph had predicted**. The significant thing about Joseph's interpretations is his **truthfulness** and his **humility**. He must have been tempted to give **favorable** interpretations to both, for political reasons. It also must have been a temptation for Joseph to claim all the power to interpret for himself—instead he gave **God the glory**. The "butler" forgot all about Joseph's request for pleading his case to Pharaoh, and still Joseph chose to suffer in silence rather than raise a cry against the injustice done to him. **But God did not forget Joseph!** God was constantly, intimately, powerfully at work every day in every event of Joseph's life to mold his character, refine and purify his temper, destroy his arrogance and give him the patience and wisdom to assume the **extra-ordinary elevation to Prime Minister of Egypt!** The chief "butler" **conveniently "forgot"** Joseph down in prison probably because he was afraid Joseph might say something that would get him hanged like the "baker" (40:22).

## GENESIS 41:1—45:28

For two years Joseph remained in Pharaoh's political prison. Most of that time he was a "trustee"—learning Egyptian language, culture, and making a name for himself as an administrator, etc. Pharaoh had a very unsettling dream. He sensed something dreadful. He called for the professional dream-interpreters (Heb. *charetumme*, means "magicians" it is the same word used in Dan. 1:20 to describe the "wise men" of Nebuchadnezzar's court—the Septuagint uses the Greek word *exegetai* from which we get the English word, "exegesis" meaning, "to explain, to interpret"). The chief "butler," former prisoner with Joseph, remembered Joseph's power to interpret dreams. Pharaoh called Joseph into his presence and said he had heard about Joseph's power to interpret dreams. Joseph's answer was: **"it is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."** God's prediction for Pharaoh was *shalom*, i.e., "well-being, prosperity, peace, etc." In other words, God's message through Joseph is that in spite of the great troubles surely coming on Egypt, this dream given him was to allow him to prepare for these troubles and endure them in *shalom* (peace). Joseph learned some very important lessons from his persecution by his brothers and his tenure in Pharaoh's prison—humility, the grace of God, courage, and wisdom. Joseph went on to suggest that Pharaoh appoint a discreet and wise man to organize and superintend grain production and storage to assuage the impending crisis of famine which Joseph had interpreted the king's dream to mean. There is not the slightest hint that Joseph was trying to get the job for himself. His concern for the Egyptians (who had treated him unjustly and harshly) was sincere! Joseph has learned compassion, too! Pharaoh appointed Joseph, gave him an Egyptian name, an Egyptian princess to marry, and gave him authority over all the land of Egypt, next to Pharaoh himself. How necessary were all the years Joseph spent (12 in all) in abject servant-hood and in prison! An interesting side-light: Some half-Egyptians/half-Hebrews became a part of the nation of Israel, i.e., descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim, sons of Joseph and his Egyptian wife, plus their grandfather was a priest in Egyptian sun-worship!!!

Joseph was 30 years of age when he began his service for Pharaoh. Everything happened just as Joseph had predicted it. Joseph began gathering a tax of 20% of each field and stored it in specially designated cities. During those years of prosperity Joseph's sons were born. Exactly as Joseph predicted, the **years of famine came**. It was very severe—it was over "all the earth" (at least that portion of the world). **Archaeological note:** An inscription was found in a family rock-cut tomb of a man named *Baba*, governor of El-Kab, erected in the dynasty under which Joseph came to power. *Baba* claims to have done for his city what the Bible says Joseph did for all Egypt, "I collected grain, as a friend of the harvest god. And when a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed grain to the city, each year of the famine." (See *Halley's Bible Handbook* under Genesis 42). Why did Joseph make the Egyptians **buy** grain—why didn't he just **give** it to them? Had it been made free to the populace,

it would have rewarded indolence and shortsightedness. Furthermore, the grain had been acquired by lawful and fair means, by devoting most of the government's taxing and buying power for 7 years. To give it away would have bankrupted and destroyed the government and brought on anarchy. It is reasonable to assume special provision was made for those who were truly poverty stricken and unable to buy. But even those to whom the grain would be provided as a gift were probably put into some type of government employment in public works, etc. **The Bible**, both OT and NT teaches that able-bodied people should work whenever they have the opportunity to do so. They are to earn their bread by working (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25; 1 Thess. 4:10-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-15, etc.). There is no doctrine of socialism or "welfare state" taught in Christianity or in the Bible at all. The Bible nowhere directs the civil government to provide anything except civil order and the protection of unalienable human rights. The Bible advocates a political-economic philosophy of "free enterprise" and individual ownership of property, and capitalism. God expects all human beings to have sufficient compassion and charity to care for the poor. There's nothing wrong with a government becoming the "servicing-agency" in disbursing welfare (food, clothing, even shelter) through a system of taxation upon those citizens who are gainfully employed—**BUT ONLY SO LONG AS THAT WELFARE GOES TO THOSE WHO CANNOT WORK!** The Bible makes no provision for "free-loaders" and "frauds" to receive "welfare" from other people's money when they are capable of working. What government should do is pass laws that every able-bodied citizen must find employment—no matter how "humble" or "low-paying" that employment may be! *What The Bible Says About Civil Government*, by Paul T. Butler, 1990, College Press. **This famine in history (and modern ones in Sudan, North Korea, etc.) should warn us that the blessings of prosperity come from the Lord and can as easily be removed by the Lord.** It should also teach us the value of saving a portion of what comes to hand, and of being sensible in using what we have. It also proves that people can, when they have to, get by quite well on far less than they are accustomed to during good times. Those of us who remember the "Great Depression" in the U.S. in the 1930's know about that! Could the "boomer generation survive an "economic turn-down" like the 1930's? God has promised to supply all our needs (Phil. 4:19), but not all our "wants" (Phil. 4:11-13).

The land of Canaan was also famine-stricken. The brothers of Joseph were "looking at one another" (Gen. 42:1) because no one wanted to suggest going to Egypt since they all had guilty consciences about selling Joseph into slavery in **Egypt**. Jacob insisted they go to Egypt, so 10 of the sons went. Jacob kept Benjamin (son of his beloved Rachel) because he was afraid something might happen to him as had happened to Joseph. More than 13 years had gone by when these 10 brothers finally met with Joseph: (a) they did not recognize him probably because he would have changed more physiologically from 17 to 30 than they would have; (b) he was dressed like an Egyptian; (c) he probably wore the Egyptian beard and the rest of his body shaved of all hair; (d) he spoke with an Egyptian language through an interpreter; (e) and Joseph probably made as much effort as possible to disguise himself or to keep them from recognizing him. As the brothers bowed down to him they were making the **very dream come true** for which they had hated him (how ironic)! Joseph was dressed in royal robes, had servants waiting on his every wish,

perhaps his Egyptian wife was present—little did these Hebrew sheep-herders dream their brother could be this majestic ruler before them!

To test their hearts, Joseph accused them of being spies. He must see if their attitudes had changed—he must test their hearts to see if they have any remorse and repentance for their past lives. Only if they have changed will he proceed to reveal who he is and mend family ties and recall the whole family to its high, godly calling toward its Messianic destiny. **Remember**, these brothers were guilty of what could be classified as kid-napping when they sold Joseph into slavery, then they lied to their father about what they had done. They deserved prison, or worse, for what they had already done. Joseph is actually going to let them “off” for their crimes against him. And what may appear to be a “frame-up” is really a lesson in “truth or consequences.”

After they had been in prison about 3 days, Joseph proposed holding one of them hostage and releasing the others to carry grain back to their famine-stricken family; they, in turn, would bring the youngest brother back to verify their claims to innocence (as spies) and their honesty about Benjamin’s well-being. They must have wondered why this Egyptian Prime Minister was so **interested** in the well-being of Benjamin. Joseph overheard their conversation and discovered Simeon was most responsible for his slavery. They didn’t know he could understand Hebrew language, so he held Simeon as hostage. Joseph’s statement, “...for I fear God” (42:18) comes out in Hebrew *aeth-haelohim aeni yarea*, literally, “...the gods I fear...” and does not necessarily mean Joseph’s brothers understood him to mean he feared Jehovah. Being imprisoned, they felt unjustly, this Egyptian prince’s insistence on seeing the only living (they thought) son of Rachel; the holding of Simeon hostage in political prison; the threat of death by Joseph—**all this stabbed their consciences**. They confessed their guilt to one another, chastised one another verbally, and accepted their present circumstances as just punishment for their crimes. This was a welcome sign to Joseph that his brothers were remorseful and penitent.

Joseph was overcome with emotion, and had to leave their presence lest they become suspicious of his identity and the rest of his plan for being reconciliation be aborted. When he had gained his composure, he returned and ordered (in the Egyptian language, of course, so they would not understand) their bags be filled with grain and their payment money **also be placed in their bags**. When this was discovered by them, he knew it would **intensify the stabbing of their consciences**. When the brothers discovered this they believed they would be accused of thievery. When they opened their bags in the presence of Jacob, he accused his sons of **responsibility** for the loss of his two sons (Joseph and Simeon), and now, the imminent loss of Benjamin. Jacob’s “guess” was more truth than he knew! Jacob cried, “The whole world is against me...” Actually, just the opposite was true. As a matter of fact, God was working all things together for good for Jacob’s family (Rom. 8:28) and the divine scheme of redemption. **Reuben** makes a very unselfish gesture, offering to let his father slay his (Reuben’s) two sons if he should let this Egyptian prince harm Benjamin. Just what satisfaction he thought his father would get out of killing two of his grandsons is not clear at all! But that does not detract from the changed attitude in Reuben’s heart. Finally, Reuben is seeing the drastic

consequences of what the brothers did in selling Joseph into Egyptian slavery.

Judah takes over as leader and tells his father “the bottom line.” They must return to Egypt with Benjamin. Judah volunteers to be “surety for Benjamin’s safety.” Judah is gaining courage, faith, nobility—out of him shall come kings of Israel, and eventually, THE KING. When the brothers return, Joseph holds a feast. Joseph is served at a place off by himself and his Hebrew brothers at a place by themselves. Joseph had given secret orders to his servants to seat the brothers in order of age. The chance of this happening by mere coincidence is 40,000,000 to 1. The brothers “look at one another with amazement!” **Someone at this feast knew more about their family than they were telling!** Another “spooky” thing happened! Waiters who brought the food, brought 5 times more to Benjamin than to any of the others. This was a deliberate honoring of the youngest in the face of all the other brothers, and, in a left-handed way, a slap in the face to their “seniority.” Joseph was not merely being “nice” to Benjamin—his purpose was to test the reactions of his “older” brothers. Will they **hate Benjamin** for being “favored” as they had hated him? They seem to have had a change of heart about this kind of conduct. Apparently it did not bother them—they drank and were merry with Benjamin. There was no suggestion of jealousy or resentment. Afterward, Joseph “framed” Benjamin by having a “cup” hidden in his sack of grain. Now the brothers have Benjamin at a disadvantage. If there is the slightest vestige of resentment among them that Benjamin is “favored,” not only by this Egyptian prince, but by their father Jacob also (because Benjamin was the child of Rachel—the beloved), they can get rid of Benjamin and come off as completely innocent. **Are they the same old brothers, with hatred in their heart for anyone “favored” above them?** That is what Joseph wants to find out! **These brothers have changed since they hated Joseph.** They were willing, to a man, to stand by Benjamin no matter what.

Notice that **Judah** has established for all practical purposes, the **leadership**, of the clan. He pleads at great lengths for mercy for Benjamin—remember Benjamin’s father’s age—Benjamin is his father’s favorite—Benjamin’s father is bereaved over his “other” son (Joseph)—Judah reveals he will stand “surety” for Benjamin—he is willing to take Benjamin’s punishment. In this willingness to give his own life in place of his brother’s for the sake of his father, **Judah possibly becomes more of a type of Christ than any other person in the OT**—especially more so than Joseph who is often said to be a type of Christ by commentators. Judah’s willingness to sacrifice himself, the innocent for the guilty, made him the most Christlike of all his brothers. Undoubtedly, this is why **Judah** rather than Joseph, was selected to be the tribal ancestor of the Messiah. Jesus is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” No human can sacrifice himself to atone for another man’s sins, because no human is perfect. But we can sacrifice ourselves by sacrificing our selfishness and, if possible, save some. Paul was willing to be “anathema” for his brethren’s sake. To be a disciple of Jesus one must “take up his cross (sacrifice of self) daily and follow” Jesus for the salvation of mankind.

Joseph’s brothers had been put through the crucible of guilt and contrition—they passed the test. The demonstrated extraordinary spiritual growth. Joseph could



control his emotions no longer. He ran his servants out of the room, but they heard the happy reunion and no doubt carried the news of it back to the royal palace compound (45:16). Joseph announced in their own Hebrew language, "I am Joseph!" Words not only failed the brothers, words also fail commentators trying to speculate about the scene. **Joseph announces his forgiveness by saying, "and now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life...to preserve you a remnant on earth...so it was not you who sent me here, but God..."** Joseph held no grudges. He realized God needed to send him to Egypt to **discipline him** so he might serve God as he should. In forgiving, Joseph had to bear the injustice of it all. No one could give him back the years in prison and slavery. No one could take back the hurt of his heart when his own brothers threw him into the pit. He had to bear that and still forgive. **All things and circumstances in life "belong to God's people"** (1 Cor. 3:21). Joseph's elevation to 2<sup>nd</sup> in rule in Egypt and Pharaoh's giving of the most fertile section of all Egypt (Goshen) to the Israelites is demonstration of that. All the world's "things" belong to God and thus he uses them (through the cooperation of human beings—or even their non-cooperation) to promote his spiritual goals and destinies of those who love him and serve him. **THAT IS HOW WE MUST SEE OUR TRIBULATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES!**

**GENESIS 46:1—50:26**

The itinerant, loosely-organized, isolated nature of patriarchal clans was no longer adequate as a redemptive-witness in the midst of a world increasingly nationalistic and urban. A **nation**, under God, must be formed to prove to all nations that all human forms of government (by their very nature—humanistic) are impotent to redeem man's sinful nature. God proceeds to institute a **theocracy**, where God, himself, will rule by putting his word into the hearts of its citizens. Later prophets will describe this as God's plan (Isa. 51:7; Jer. 31:33; Ezek. chs. 36-37; Zeph. 3:8-20, etc.). Thus, it is time for the curtain to ring down on the Patriarchal Dispensation (for all historical purposes). Before the curtain falls, however, some plans for the future **theocracy** must grow out of the patriarchal finale. The one Chosen Family, with which God is going to build this **nation**, must be protected from the danger of being assimilated into some other cultural and political milieu. The one brother who had been cast out of the chosen family (Joseph) must have his inheritance restored and perpetuated. The will of God concerning future tribal assignments within the nation must be revealed by prophecy. Burial preparations and promises must be made so that the "land of Promise" will be forever etched on the Israelite consciousness. Little is known of the Chosen People between the numbering of the "70 offspring" of Jacob who took up residence in Egypt, and the raising up of Moses for the exodus, except the "oppression" of the Israelites by a "king who knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:1-22) and a genealogical record which shows some 10 or 11 generations of Israelites during that time (1 Chron. 7:20-27). Jacob's "70" multiplied during those 350 years until they numbered approximately 2,500,000 at the exodus. That's about the population of America at the close of the Revolutionary War. Early America's 2.5 million came as a result of large immigrations from Europe. In the case of the Israelites, there must have been a tremendous amount of marriages of "cousins" or a big mixture of Israelite and Egyptian races to produce such growth. **GROWTH, CONSOLIDATION, AND DISCIPLINE (through opposition) WAS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR SENDING JACOB AND HIS "70" TO EGYPT.**

Jacob entered Egypt about 215 years after Abram's entry into Canaan. Jacob was about 130 years old when he moved to Egypt. Joseph was 39 or 40. Jacob lived 17 more years and died. Joseph lived past his father's death another 54 years. The **exodus** was approximately 360 years after Joseph's death. God promised to go with Jacob down to Egypt and also promised to "bring Jacob up again" from Egypt. Jacob died in Egypt, but his body was buried in Canaan with his ancestors and it was not until 11 generations after Jacob that his family (nation) was delivered from Egypt. In the interval, Jacob and his "clan" were placed in the land of Goshen. Because of Joseph's standing with Pharaoh, and undoubtedly the providence of God intervening, the Israelites were given Goshen as "a possession." The storehouse cities of Pithom and Raamses (Ex. 1:11) were later built in this area by Israelite slave-labor. **Goshen** is on the eastern edge of the Nile delta. That makes it very fertile for agricultural and herding needs of Jacob's descendants. It is also strategically away from the urban centers of Egyptian government and abuts the Sinai peninsula which would later be

the route of escape for Israel from Egypt. The Israelites had “free” fish to eat in Egypt (Num. 11:5). They dwelt in the “fields” of Zoan (Psa. 78:12). All the resources of God’s creation are his to call upon to supply the needs of those who covenant with him in his redemptive work for mankind. These experiences should have made the Israelites **thankful**. They should have made them **believe** in God more firmly than ever. BUT WE SHALL SEE! (in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, that is not quite the story!).

Joseph must have anticipated that his Hebrew people would be in danger in Egypt. He was grateful that Pharaoh had agreed the Hebrews would be in Goshen (away as it was from Egypt’s centers of power). Also, they would be mostly herders of sheep and cattle. Egyptians despised sheep-herders and would leave them alone. This would give the Hebrews not only safety, but good opportunity to **increase** population-wise and property-wise. They could grow and have a relatively peaceful and free existence.

The famine was very severe—“there was no food in all the land” (47:13). Joseph saved both Israel and Egypt. His humanitarian goodness and wisdom was remembered by the Egyptians for hundreds of years! And good came of it. When the people used up all their money to buy grain, they demanded from Joseph that he **give** them food. Joseph responded that they must **buy** food with their cattle as their exchange. When the cattle were all “spent” **they came** to Joseph offering their **bodies** and their **lands** as exchange for food. Joseph agreed to the deal on behalf of the Pharaoh. The people would become “servants.” They would also relinquish ownership of their land to the Pharaoh. THIS WAS **NOT** JOSEPH’S SCHEME TO GET RICH OR ENSLAVE THE PEOPLE: (a) it was **their** idea in the first place; (b) Joseph gave title to all the land to Pharaoh—not himself; (c) it created a feudalistic economy, but the **alternative** was a national dole system that would have destroyed personal and national morale and probably have ended Egypt’s history in anarchy like that of ancient Rome (ca. A.D. 450); (d) the people did **not** become slaves, but servants, giving 20% of their profits to the government, keeping 80% and, since the land belong to Pharaoh, the people would use seed grain furnished by Pharaoh, they had no rent to pay except the 20% income tax, no cost of upkeep, no investment, nothing but their own personal expenses; (e) an income tax of 20% is **not excessive** even by today’s standards (considering all the taxes, local, county, state, and federal, paid by the American working person today 20% looks like a God-send!); (f) those who did not own land were moved nearer the cities where grain was stored and presumably were **employed** in government projects; (g) this system certainly left something to be desired in terms of “free-enterprise” but a centralized bureaucracy, **intelligently and unselfishly** administered as it was under Joseph, is preferable to mass starvation and anarchy; (h) there was little, if any, complaining about these terms—the Egyptians proclaimed Joseph as a savior; (i) they retained the system even until the day of Moses! THIS IS NOT SOCIALISM OR COMMUNISM AS MARX AND LENIN AND OTHER SOCIALISTS VIEWED IT! Here’s one wag’s facetious definition of economic systems: (a) Socialism—you have two cows, you give one to your neighbor and the government shares the milk of the one you keep with the jobless; (b) Communism—you have two cows, you give both to the government and

the government gives you back as much milk as it thinks you ought to have; (c) Fascism—you keep two cows, and then give the government the milk, and the government gives you as much milk as it dictates; (d) Nazi-ism—the government shoots you and takes the two cows; (e) New-Dealism (FDR)—the government shoots one cow, milks the other, pays you a subsidy, and then pours the milk down the sewer until the government goes broke; (f) Free Enterprise Capitalism—you sell one cow and buy a bull.

The Hebrews were located on the choicest land in Egypt and were industrious people. They “gained possessions” the text says. The main reason they prospered, however, was they remained a “free-enterprise” system economically while the Egyptians, by their own choice, opted for the government to take care of them, thus selling themselves into servitude to their own government.. **It is a fact of history that the more the citizens of a nation look to and demand that their government “take care” of their every need (health, education, protect their business from competition, pensions) just that much more the government will regulate their lives and bind them to servitude, economically if not politically, to government!** Of course there has to be some human government of human societies and human endeavors—BUT THE LESS GOVERNMENT THE BETTER. **Remember** the Constitution of the United States of America and **recite** it to your children and grandchildren OFTEN—especially the **Preamble**—“**We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.**” THAT IS ALL THE CONSTITUTION WAS MEANT TO DO! America is literally, “a land of Goshen” in the present-world-order of politics and governments. We are blessed as no other nation on earth. We must continually fight to preserve our economic system of capitalism-free-enterprise (*laissez-faire*) or we will become slaves to our government!

Jacob summoned all his remaining strength to give Joseph a special blessing: (a) partly because of all he had done for the family in Egypt; (b) primarily because he was the firstborn of his beloved Rachel; (c) finally because Jacob probably knew Joseph would die in Egypt and he would therefore give Joseph’s inheritance to Joseph’s two sons equal to Joseph’s brothers. Also Jacob rehearsed the old **patriarchal covenant** God made with him and his forefathers. Then Jacob adopted Joseph’s sons as his own for legal purposes of passing on the inheritance. Manasseh and Ephraim would really be Joseph’s sons the same as the offspring of Judah would be called Jacob’s sons. Jacob is not just praying for physical progeny. He desires that those of the **faith** of his fathers and himself become many in the earth. God knew what these 12 brothers would be like. He warned them and encouraged them through this prophetic word from Jacob. Jesus said, “...he knew what was in man” (John 2:25) and he demonstrated it by reading the thoughts and characters of his disciples and others. The Bible is a divinely-perceptive psychological analysis of human character and need (**Heb. 4:12-13**). Look into it and see yourself as you really are and as your Creator knows you, and take heed and take encouragement. We don’t need a therapist to tell what our Creator tells us. Jacob’s divinely inspired prophecy came to

pass exactly. Ephraim became the dominant tribe of the northern kingdom after Israel's division in the days of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:19,25). The ten northern tribes are often simply called "Ephraim" (Isa. 7:2,5; Hosea 5:3ff, etc.).

Chapter 49 is one of the most fascinating and difficult chapters of Genesis: (a) **Reuben**—weak, unstable, lustful, guilty of adultery and incest with Bilhah, his right to pre-eminence as the firstborn went to another (Judah); Reuben's tribe never furnished a leader for Israel, Reubenites didn't want to cross the Jordan with the other tribes (Num. 32), they participated in the erection of an unauthorized place of worship (Josh. 22:10-34) and they refused to answer the call to fight the Canaanites (Judges 5:15-16); (b) **Simeon and Levi**—closest companions among the brothers, cruel, hot-tempered, vengeful, and wild, God separated them for their own good; Simeon's inheritance was "within that of Judah" (Josh 19:1), sons of Simeon were captured and dwelt in the lands of the Edomites and Amalekites (1 Chron. 4:39-43), eventually assimilated by Judah or scattered outside of Israel; little is heard of these tribes after king Asa; Levites never had an inheritance of their own in the land—only scattered cities (Josh. 21:1-3; Levites largely redeemed themselves by their stand against idolatry in the days of Moses (Ex. 32:36); Moses, himself a descendant of Levi, manifested some of that hasty temper when he arose and slew the Egyptian; (c) **Judah**—became leader among the tribes; defeated Israel's enemies; became the "lion" before whom all the rest of the tribes bowed down; his land became productive and fruitful (2 Sam. 2 Chron); (d) **Zebulun**—dwelt toward the seashore, a haven of ships with its northern border facing the ancient seaport of Sidon (Josh. 19:11); this tribe located between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean (Matt. 4:13-16); (e) **Issachar**—"a strong ass, bowing down beneath a big burden, strong but docile and lazy; enjoyed the good life but would not strive for it; eventually pressed into servitude for his masters; had rich lands and rich crops which attracted invaders and captors (Num. 1:28-29; 26:25; 1 Chron. 7:5; Num. 13:7; Judg. 5:15; 10:1; 1 Kings 15:27; 1 Chron. 12:32; 2 Chron. 38:18); (f) **Dan**—son of a handmaiden still he received his inheritance; he would judge his people; like a venomous snake he was a dangerous adversary to any foreigner seeking to attack the land of Israel from the north; Jeroboam who divided the kingdom set up one of his two golden calves to worship in Dan (1 Kings 18:28-30; Deut. 29:16-21); (g) **Gad**—name means, "troop;" militarily strong and able to repel invaders; territory was east of the Jordan on the edge of the Ammonites and other desert peoples, especially open to invasion; Gadites were able-bodied fighters (1 Chron. 5:18; 12:8); (h) **Asher**—had enjoyed rich food and royal delicacies; territory on the rich northern seacoast plain and included Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon, Josh. 19:24-31); failed to take possession of all its territory and soon became insignificant and not heard of in history; (i) **Naphtali**—"a hind let loose," known for its swiftness as warriors, known as composers of eloquent speech and beautiful literature (i.e., "victory song" of Deborah and Barak, Judg. 5:1-31); best known of his descendants is Barak, who, with Deborah, won a mighty victory over Jabin and Sisera (Judg. 4:6,15); (j) **Joseph**—material prosperity, many descendants; would be morally victorious over the enmity of his brothers; would be helped by the same God who sustained Jacob; these prophecies fulfilled later in **Manasseh & Ephraim**; many of Israel's early leaders were from Ephraim (Joshua, Deborah, Samuel) and Manasseh (Gideon and Jephthah), both tribes strong in war and their



lands were fertile and productive; Jeroboam, Ephraimite, led the rebellion which divided the kingdom of Israel; (**k**) **Benjamin**—“a ravening wolf,” this was a promise and a warning; the tribe was bold and strong, but cruel and voracious (Judges 20), the first king of Israel was a Benjaminite—Saul, son of Kish (the apostle Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin). **Jacob’s** blessing **centered** especially on **Joseph & Judah** and these two tribes eventually became the two dominant divisions of Israel, also significant that only the physical blessings were promised to Joseph’s tribe—the spiritual blessing of producing the Messiah was promised to Judah (the converted reprobate)!

The phrase (in KJV), “The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until **Shiloh** come...” (Gen. 49:10) is translated in the Septuagint, “A ruler shall not fail from Judah nor a prince from his loins, until **he** comes for whom these things have been stored up...” or “...until **he** comes whose it is...” The RSV translates 49:10, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until **he** comes to whom it belongs...” This is similar to Ezekiel 21:27, “...until **he** comes whose right it is...” The NT clearly identifies the Lord Jesus Christ with this prophecy, calling Jesus “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5). Once the tribe of Judah, under David, attained leadership over the Israelites, the scepter never departed from Judah (leadership)—not even in the captivities or after the captivities (Daniel was from Judah, Zerubbabel was from Judah, etc.). Jacob’s prophecy that Judah’s “eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk” is not predicting drunken debauchery, but is using highly figurative language to depict the great prosperity of the tribe, as if to say, “...its vines would be so plentiful and productive as to make wine run like the water in which he washes his clothes, so invigorating that it would impart a sparkling brilliance to the eyes, and a charming whiteness to the teeth.” When **Messiah** (Jesus Christ of Nazareth) came, he claimed the crown promised him as the Anointed One of the tribe of Judah. After he received his coronation at the right hand of God, no more descendants of Judah ever reigned over Israel! Since the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews in A.D. 70, all genealogical records have been lost. Tribal distinctions have been obliterated or blurred beyond recognition. No Jew today can trace his ancestry back, with documents, beyond more than 400 years!

Jacob was a very important person in God’s redemptive program. No other burial in the Bible is accorded so long and detailed an account as his. His burial in Canaan was to be a **testimony** to all generations to come that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had faith in God’s promise that he would give the land to their seed and establish them as the Messianic nation. Joseph’s burial in Canaan was the same kind of testimony (Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). And because of his faith in the promises God made to his forefathers, Joseph is listed in the “faith” chapter of Hebrews (Heb. 11:22). **Time marches on.** Empires, circumstances, and people (no matter how powerful or indispensable humans may think they are) will not deter the inevitable, inexorable forward-march, goal-oriented, redemptive program of God. Even the death of great patriarchs will not slow it down. God moves on when we are gone!

### Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

### Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

