Genesis — Chapter One

Gen. 1:1 "In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth."

> "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth." (ASV)

"created" — bara — *"A primitive root; (absolutely) to create"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to create. Only God is the subject of this verb"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 161); *"To create, form, make, produce; to cut, to cut down; to engrave, to carve...emphasizes the initiation of the object, not manipulating it after original creation"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"In the beginning" In the LXX, this is exactly the same phrase as that found in John 1:1. It might be considered here that before "the beginning" (time), everything was eternal and spiritual, i.e., non-material. The GODHEAD existed by itself, alone, until some point when the angelic host was created. These existed before the time spoken of in this passage — before **the creation**. Regarding time, it should be pointed out that outside the material realm, there is no need for time.

In the text, the Hebrew word used here is "bara." It is a word which signifies something being created from nothing.

> *"The rabbins, who are legitimate judges in a case of verbal criticism on their own language, are unanimous in asserting that the word bara expresses the commencement of the existence of a thing, or expression from nonentity to entity"* (Clarke, p. 29).

Another way of putting this is that no material thing existed for GOD to form into the earth, planets, stars — in short, the universe and all that in them is.

> *"God in the beginning created the substance of the heavens and the substance of the earth"* (Translation by Clarke, p. 29).

> *"In the beginning of God's preparing the heavens and the earth"* (Young's Literal Translation, CD).

This is a clear statement that matter is not eternal. GOD called forth matter (created matter) and then molded the matter He created into the physical universe(s). How all of this was done is beyond the scope of any theory which man may have — it is indeed a mystery which man (on this side of eternity) can never figure out. The statement found in this opening verse is a mortal blow to evolutionists (as are many other passages, as well as simple, logical reasoning without the Scriptures). This is true because, in order for the theory of evolution to be accurate, matter must be eternal. Matter had a **"BEGINNING!"**

The evolution theorist says that, at some point, an

evolving took place, and they say it has been going on for millions and millions of years. For argument's sake, let us say that the figure they use is one hundred million years ago. Ok, let one go back one hundred million years ago — *from where did that which began to evolve come?* Or the big-bang theorist says a dense mass exploded and everything came from that. Question: *From where did that dense mass come (Big bang theory)?* Further, an explosion is destructive — not productive. *Since when has an explosion in a lumber yard created a house or any other useful thing?* At precisely either of these points, these theorists must confront a Creator — the GOD of the Bible. Consider here the question GOD asked Job and ask the evolutionist the same question.

> "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof" (Job 38:4-6)?

In order to know the answers to the above questions, one must have them revealed by the one who did them, or he must himself be GOD. Though GOD does not give all of the details of these events, He does reveal in general terms what He did. For any man to declare that he knows how the world began — outside of GOD's revelation — indeed declares himself a fool!

> *"Atheists are the greatest fools in nature"* (Henry, p. 3).

It should also be pointed out here that the word "bara" is only used in the Scriptures with reference to GOD. This points out that only GOD could do whatever is signified in the context. The Hebrew language has another word for that which is made from existing materials.

"In the beginning, GOD" *What was in the beginning, i.e., what existed before time began?* GOD — *Elohim*! *"El"* refers to GOD, and *"Elohim"* is the plural of *"El."*

> *"Come see the mystery of the word Elohim; there are three degrees, and each degree by itself alone, and yet notwithstanding they are all one, and joined together in one, and are not divided from each other"* (Simeon ben Joachi, quoted by Clarke, p. 28).

Thus, in the very beginning of the Bible, one finds evidence for the GODHEAD. Notice should be given here to the fact that Moses did not try to defend the existence of the GODHEAD — speaking by inspiration, he simply declared GOD's existence.

> *"In the very first verse of the Bible there would appear to be imbedded embryonically in the very name of God himself a suggestion (1) of the trinitarian conception more fully revealed in the NT,*

and (2) also a witness of the unity of the Godhead" (Coffman, p. 26).

"It came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water (Jesus, RK), he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit (Holy Spirit, RK) like a dove descending upon Him: And there came a voice (Father, RK) from Heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:9-11, emphasis mine, RK).

What is GOD, i.e., what are His qualities? What makes Him GOD?

1. In order to be GOD, He must be infinite. If one is not infinite, he cannot be GOD. To be infinite is to be without beginning and without end. Infinite means one has no limitations or external restrictions.
2. To be GOD, one must be omniscient. To be omniscient, one must know everything and have absolute understanding of what he knows.
   "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting GOD, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding" (Isaiah 40:28).
3. To be GOD, one must be omnipotent. To be omnipotent, one must have all authority — thus one is all-powerful. *Is there anything that GOD cannot do?* GOD cannot do anything which is contrary to His nature.
4. To be GOD, one must be omnipresent. To be omnipresent, one must be capable of being everywhere at any time — space and time mean nothing to GOD.
   "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell (Sheol, realm of the dead - RK), behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee;

for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:7-16).

"In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth." *What did this infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent GOD do?* He "created the heaven and the earth." *Is this a summary of the creation which is spoken of in the following verses?* It is this writer's belief that it may be a summary, but most likely it is speaking of GOD's creating the material which He would then mold into the things He made from it during the six days of creation. As noted, above this material was "bara," created from nothing — no preexisting material — something only GOD could do!

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of GOD, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth...For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:6, 9).

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

"And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters" (ASV)

"without form" — tohu — *"To lie waste; a desolation (of surface), i.e. desert; figuratively, a worthless thing; adverbially, in vain:--confusion, empty place, without form, nothing, (thing of) nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness"* (Strong's, CD); *"Formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness... formlessness, of primaeval earth, of land reduced to primaeval chaos"* (Brown/ Driver/Briggs, p. 1062); *"It means desolation, desert, a desolated city, a worthless thing, confusion, emptiness, vanity, unreality, nothingness"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning formlessness, confusion...It is used to describe primeval earth before the seven creative days; a land reduced to primeval chaos and formlessness"* (Baker/Carpenter, p.

1214).

"void" — bohu — *"An unused root (meaning to be empty); a vacuity, i.e. (superficially) an undistinguishable ruin:--emptiness, void"* (Strong's, CD); *"Emptiness"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 96); *"A masculine noun indicating void or emptiness. It depicts the state of matter after God had created it but before He had fashioned it for habitation"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 121).

Morris gives this translation of the present verse: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (or space and matter), and the matter so created was at first unformed and uninhabited"* (p. 50). The terms he used, *"unformed and uninhabited,"* seem to fit perfectly with the Hebrew definitions for "without form and void" (see above). MacArthur says this phrase means *"not finished in its shape, and, as yet, uninhabited by creatures"* (p. 8).

Further, one is told that matter was not only formless and without life, but it was also dark. The word "darkness" is the same word used in Exodus 10:21-23. There it is described as a "darkness which may be felt." It is also called "a thick darkness," and during that darkness they "saw not one another." This darkness was so oppressive that they did not move from their place, i.e., from wherever they were when the darkness which GOD sent struck. *Did they not have lamps?* This darkness seemed to suffocate light.

It would be good to consider something known as the "Gap Theory." The Gap Theory basically states that the earth was in existence in a perfect condition, and then GOD destroyed and recreated. This is an attempt to harmonize the evolutionist's assertions that the fossils are millions or billions of years old, but the Biblical timetable makes the earth very young (fewer than ten thousand years old). *Does any other Scripture even remotely verify the gap theory?* **Absolutely not!** *Does any Scripture hint at a world-wide catastrophe before Genesis 1:2?* **Absolutely not!**

> "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11).
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> "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17).

Note the verses above and observe that they confirm that the earth and everything in it were made in six days. There was no gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 — such is nothing more that an attempt to compromise so that the

science-worshipers will not denigrate GOD's people. Christians must not be ashamed to stand for what the Bible says about creation, for if they are then GOD will not own them as His own.

At a later date, this writer will look at the concept of the days of this chapter in more detail. Suffice it for the time being simply to state that the days of Genesis chapter one were twenty-four hour days, just as is known today.

Gen. 1:3- 5 "And GOD said, Let there be light: and there was light. And GOD saw the light, that it was good: and GOD divided the light from the darkness. And GOD called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

> "And GOD said, Let there be light: and there was light. And GOD saw the light, that it was good: and GOD divided the light from the darkness. And GOD called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." (ASV)

"good" — tobah — *"It means good, pleasant, beautiful, excellent, lovely, delightful, convenient, joyful, fruitful, precious, sound, cheerful, kind, correct, righteous; the good, the right, virtue, happiness, pleasantness. It may refer to practical or economic benefits, wisdom, aesthetic or sensual goodness, happiness, or preference"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"An adjective meaning good, well-pleasing, fruitful, morally correct, proper, convenient"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 399).

"divided" — badal — *"To separate, disjoin; to distinguish between diverse things; to select out of a group; to shut out; to separate; to sever, divide, discern, make a difference"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to separate, to divide, to detach"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 119).

On the first day of creation, GOD created light. The word "Genesis" means *"beginning."* In keeping with this, there will be a lot of firsts in this book. Here is the first of the firsts — GOD spoke. *What did He command?* That there should be light. Since the word "GOD" in verse one is plural, one might ask, *"Did all of the GODHEAD perform this action, or was one of them designated to do this?"* When looking at the New Testament, one finds the answer to this question.

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3 — verse fourteen shows the "Word" was the second person of the GODHEAD, Jesus the Christ.)

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible GOD, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:14-17, emphasis mine, RK).

One should not think that all of the GODHEAD were not involved in this creation for they were, but each had his particular role to play in the total creation. It is similar to a building's being built. An architect is needed to design the building, a contractor oversees the work to make sure all is done according to the plan, and the builder puts it all together. Another way to look at this is that GOD the Father was the designer, GOD the Son was the builder, and GOD the Spirit was the beautifier of what was designed and built by the other two. It is believed by this writer that the whole process was much more complicated than the simple way he looks at the creative role of each member of the GODHEAD.

Note the pattern used here: (1) GOD spoke, (2) something was made, (3) an evening and morning were declared to be a day. This pattern continues throughout the six days of creation.

"It was all wrought by God's omnipotent word, not by mysterious emanations from the divine being, not by natural processes, not by self-causation, but in a manner worthy of God and revealing the character of God" (Leupold, p. 51).

In verse four, *what does the term "good" mean?* The light accomplished what it was intended to do.

There is a phrase in these three verses which is very interesting to this writer — "GOD divided the light from the darkness." In looking at the above definitions of the word "divided," one sees the idea of things being separated or detached. This seems to indicate two things which were joined or mixed together until something was done to separate them and make them distinct one from the other. This raises the question — *were the darkness and light somehow mingled together before GOD separated them?* In this writer's mind, though he cannot understand how this could all be, it seems that light and darkness were somehow mixed together.

How did GOD create light when the sun, moon and stars were not created until day four? How could there be evening and morning without the sun and moon? To a human being such is a major problem — **but not for GOD.**

"the evening and the morning were the first day" This is

a phrase which will be repeated in each of the six creation days. The margin of this writer's Bible says the Hebrew here is *"And the evening was and the morning was."* This seems to be the general consensus among the scholars consulted. A day then was composed of two elements: an evening and a morning.

Gen. 1:6-8 "And GOD said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And GOD made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And GOD called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

> "And GOD said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And GOD made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And GOD called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day." (ASV)

"firmament" — raqiya — *"This masc. noun comes from raMqa. It means an expanse, the sky, the vault of heaven (space), the arch above; pavement, floor"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning an expanse, the firmament, an extended surface. Literally, this word refers to a great expanse and, in particular, the vault of the heavens above the earth. It denotes the literal sky that stretches from horizon (Gen. 1:6-8); the heavens above that contain the sun, moon, and stars (Gen. 1:14); or any vaulted ceiling or expanse that stands above (Ezek. 10:1)"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1978); *"The vault or arch of the sky: HEAVENS"* (Webster, CD).

Here in simple thought, human beings are shown the creation of the atmosphere which divides the waters above from those on the planet called Earth.

> *"The word radia, translated 'firmament,' means literally, 'stretched out,' hence 'expanse,' and by necessary inference, alludes to the atmosphere. Obviously, this is the space above the earth, in general what we call the sky, the habitat of the winds and clouds, and the space in which the celestial bodies of our solar system move in their courses"* (Crawford, p. 141).

"divide the waters from the waters" Consider the water which is above the earth, which is separated from the earth by the atmosphere. Coffman states that there are millions and billions of tons of water suspended in space at all times. *What would happen if GOD repealed His law regarding the operation of the atmosphere as a separator of these waters?* There would be a flood as in the days of

Noah, though it would not be as severe because the waters under the earth would need to be unleashed before it would be like the flood in Noah's time.

> "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11, emphasis mine, RK).

Thus, the firmament forms a kind of canopy above the earth. This canopy protects everything on earth from the rays of the sun. Without this protection, the earth would soon burn up.

On this day too, it is mentioned that there were an evening and a morning which made a day — precisely, "the second day."

Gen. 1:9-13 "And GOD said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And GOD called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and GOD saw that it was good. And GOD said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and GOD saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."

> "And GOD said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And GOD called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and GOD saw that it was good. And GOD said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and GOD saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day." (ASV)

"gathered" — qawah — *"A primitive root; to bind together (perhaps by twisting), i.e. collect; (figuratively) to expect:--gather (together), look, patiently, tarry, wait (for, on, upon)"* (Strong's, CD); *"To bind together; to be gathered together, be joined; to meet"* (Zodhiates, CD);
"A verb meaning to wait for, to look for, to hope for. The root meaning is that of twisting or winding a strand or cord or rope" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 986); *"Be collected"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 876).

"appear" — raah, — *"To see; to see intellectually, to look; to look at, view, inspect, regard; to perceive"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to see. Its basic denotation is to see*

with the eyes" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1023).

Some of the interesting things to notice about the first three days of creation are the divisions which take place. Day one: darkness divided from the light. Day two: division of waters above from those below (atmosphere). Day three: division of solid matter from the liquid. There will be another division on day four: the lights of heaven.

It should be noted that the description of the waters under the firmament describes the mass "under the firmament" as being composed of both water and matter — one big soup, so to speak. In verse nine, the English word "appear" comes from the Hebrew word "raah" which means to look at something intellectually. When one looks at the word "gathered," he sees that the Hebrew word speaks of a binding together of the waters. *What binds water together into one place? Is it not the land which causes a border for the seas?*

GOD now separates this mass into "earth" and "seas" — borders are established. To this writer, it is the most amazing thing to consider this great soupy mix being divided, especially from the perspective of the earth. To bring both of these areas together into their respective boundaries, the rocks would have been created, the sands, dirt, et cetera — and all placed so that they complemented one another. These are called "foundations of the earth" in other passages.

> "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands" (Psalm 102:25).

GOD, in rebuking Job, asked him, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding" (Job 38:4). Further, it should be considered that ALL OF THIS was done in the first part of day three. Verses eleven through thirteen show what was done in the remainder of the day.

GOD spoke again, and the grasses, herbs and trees were produced — again, simply on the basis of the power of His words. The term "bring forth" is from the Hebrew dasa: *"A verb meaning to produce green plants or fresh green grass. With the earth as its subject, it depicts the initial production of green vegetables or grass"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 249). These three items represent all of the plant life which appeared on the earth. All of this plant life is spoken of as being in mature, full-grown status — they clothed the earth. Note that they had the appearance of age at the end of day three, even though they were only hours old. If one is reading this and is a geologist, hopefully he will consider this when he looks at the earth and tries to date its rocks and soil.

> *"The processes operating in Creation Week were not the processes of the present era, but were*

processes of 'creating and making,' and are thus not commensurate with present processes at all. Adam was created as a full-grown man, the trees were created as full-grown trees, and the whole universe was made as a functioning entity, complete and fully developed, right from the beginning" (Morris, p. 63).

"This ninth verse surely teaches that what we call geological formations took place in titanic and gigantic measures at a vastly accelerated pace in a truly miraculous creative work as astounding as the rest" (Crawford, p. 64).

It is suggested by this writer that the geologist should look at the evidence provided by the eruption of Mount Saint Helens which laid down "geological layers" that match those claimed to have been created by them gradually over millions of years. Mount Saint Helens' eruption accomplished the same layer result in a matter of days.

In verse eleven, the words "seed" and "kind" are mentioned. Within each plant, GOD placed a system which allowed order to exist, and this order is maintained through His providence. There is nothing miraculous after the creation as to a plant's producing after its kind, nor a human being's reproducing after his kind. GOD set the laws of reproduction in order, and those laws are maintained through His providential care. One does not take an apple seed, plant it, nourish it, and end up with an orange tree. One does not breed a male and female horse and have the female horse produce a cow. Two horses mating can only bring forth one of their own kind — a horse (Genesis 1:24)! Likewise, two monkeys/apes mating have never and will never bring forth a human child nor any so-called in-between creature. This author's sister breeds purebred Scottish Fold cats. When she breeds them, she does not expect that, when the litter is born, it will be anything except Scottish Fold cats — there will not be any Siamese kittens in that litter, nor a bulldog — just Scottish Folds! One should never forget that the "evolutionary theory" was designed to eliminate GOD from the existence of all physical things. It is further observed that scientific observation confirms that all things reproduce after their own "kind." If one tries to argue from "mutation," it is scientifically observed that mutations are harmful not beneficial.

"GOD giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (1 Corinthians 15:38-39, emphasis mine, RK).

Consider that plant life was created before the animals and man. *Is that not logical?* The animals and man would

need something to eat when they were created. The evolutionary cycle states that animals and human beings were created millions of years before plant life. *How did they survive if this be true?* Obviously, they could not! It is clear that evolutionists are so determined to remove GOD from the existence of man that they refuse to think logically regarding the existence of this earth, or they ignore or deal dishonestly with the evidence found all around them.

Gen. 1:14-19 "And GOD said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And GOD made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And GOD set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and GOD saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

> "And GOD said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And GOD made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And GOD set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and GOD saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day." (ASV)

> "Then GOD said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth; and it was so. Then GOD made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. GOD set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And GOD saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day." (NKJV)

For three days there had been light and darkness. The earth was obviously spinning on its axis during this time, and the light (once created) was also obviously always coming from one direction. Otherwise, there could not have been the morning and evening if there were simply light with no directional guidance.

Now bodies of light are placed in position to serve as markers for signs, markers of seasons and markers for measuring time. By the position of these bodies, men would be able to determine direction in order to navigate on

land and sea. It should be noted that, in the original, the word "lights" in this verse is totally different from the word "light" in verse three. In the present verse, the word means *"luminaries"* or *"light bearers,"* whereas in verse three, it is simply the concept of light. It should also be observed that the purpose of these lights was to give light and not originate light. Light had already been "originated" on day one.

There are two great lights among all of these lights; the greater is the sun, and the lesser is the moon. The sun is greater because it is the producer of light, while the lesser is a reflector of light. As the earth rotates around the sun and on its axis, the seasons are determined (as well as the calendar) by these two lights. The stars are mentioned *"almost"* as a side note. *Why?* Because the sun and moon are the heavenly bodies which have the most direct impact upon the earth with regard to light.

Gen. 1:20-23 "And GOD said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And GOD created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and GOD saw that it was good. And GOD blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day."

> "And GOD said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And GOD created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and GOD saw that it was good. And GOD blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day." (ASV)

"bring forth abundantly" — saras — *"To wriggle, i.e. (by implication) swarm or abound:--breed (bring forth, increase) abundantly (in abundance), creep, move"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to swarm; to breed abundantly; to multiply. It means to teem, to swarm in numbers and rate of birth and multiplication"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1202); *"Swarm, teem"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 1056).

"whales" — tanniyn — *"A marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal:--dragon, sea-monster, serpent, whale"* (Strong's, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning a serpent, a dragon, and a sea monster"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1237); *"A huge fish; a marine or land monster, a dragon, a sea serpent, a water animal, a whale, a shark, a*

crocodile, a snake" (Zodhiates, CD); *"Serpent, dragon, sea-monster"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 1072).

"fill" — male — *"A primitive root, to fill or (intransitively) be full of"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to fill, to be full, to be complete, to fulfill, to finish, to satisfy"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 612); *"To fill, accomplish. The verb generally denotes the completion of something that was unfinished or the filling of something that was empty"* (Zodhiates, CD).

The first thing to notice in this section is the phrase, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly." This is not a good translation, as the scholars often point out. If one notes the ASV and NKJV, he will see better translations of the original here. The waters did not bring forth these creatures — GOD "created" (bara) them.

> *"The optative of the verb sharats followed by the cognate object sherets here must mean: 'Let the waters swarm with swarms'"* (Leupold, p. 78).

> *"The first introduction of animal life was not a fragile blob of protoplasm that happened to come together in response to electrical discharges over a primeval ocean, as evolutionist believe. Rather, the waters suddenly swarmed abundantly with swarming creatures"* (Morris, p. 68).

Notice the order found in this context — the plants and vegetation were created first, and then the birds and water creatures. Thus, they would have something to eat. The birds would have places for nests. One of the things often overlooked is the necessity of the plants in order for the created creatures to breathe. There is also the hint that the great fish were created first and the smaller second (this writer believes they were all created at the same time - instantaneously). This is the opposite of the evolutionist's desires for how things came into existence.

> *"Evolutionary theory says that marine organisms evolved first, then land plants, later birds"* (Norris, p. 70).

It should also be asked, *"How did these creatures reproduce?"* "after their kind" In other words, fish did not turn into birds or apes into human beings. This was the blessing bestowed upon them in verse twenty-two — reproduction according to one's kind.

Day five ends with, and this writer emphasizes, "the evening and the morning were the fifth day."

Gen. 1:24-25 "And GOD said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And GOD made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth

after his kind: and GOD saw that it was good."

> "And GOD said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so. And GOD made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and GOD saw that it was good." (ASV)

The first part of the sixth day of creation is the account of the land animals' being made by GOD. It is also the last day of physical creation.

The theory of evolution says that insects, amphibians and reptiles were created before birds, but GOD says that just the opposite is true.

Again one sees two familiar phrases: "after his kind" and "good." Phrases which again emphasize that creation was not in part but complete, whole and excellent. And that animals produce only their own kind and not a new kind.

Gen. 1:26-27 "And GOD said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So GOD created man in His own image, in the image of GOD created He him; male and female created He them."

> "And GOD said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And GOD created man in His own image, in the image of GOD created He him; male and female created He them." (ASV)

"dominion" — radhah — *"A primitive root; to tread down, i.e. subjugate; specifically, to crumble off:--(come to, make to) have dominion, prevail against, reign, (bear, make to) rule,(-r, over), take"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to rule, to have dominion, to subjugate. This Hebrew word conveys the notion of exercising domain, whether legitimate or not, over those who are powerless or otherwise under one's control"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1037); *"To tread down (as a winepress, with the feet); to subjugate, subdue"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Dominion, rule, dominate"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 921).

"Let Us make man in Our image" John 4:24 says, "GOD is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." GOD is not flesh and blood. Since He is spirit, then it must be that it is the spirit of man which is like GOD. Further, man's spirit, like the Spirit of GOD, can see, hear, smell, speak and think abstractly. The fact that man can reason abstractly separates him

from all of the animals which were created. Further, man is told to have dominion, i.e., to rule over all of that which was created before him. **This shows the superiority of man over all of the rest of GOD's creation.** Unlike the evolutionist, who considers himself as kin to the slime, GOD shows that man is akin to Himself. Speaking of man's body, Morris makes the following observation:

> *"He designed it, not like the animals, but with an erect posture, with an upward gazing countenance, capable of facial expressions corresponding to emotional feelings, and with a brain and tongue capable of articulate, symbolic speech"* (Morris, p. 74).

> "Put on the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

> "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Colossians 3:10).

When one considers the creation as a whole, he sees the creation beginning with the lesser and constantly moving to the greater until it reaches the crown jewel of GOD's creation — human beings. Nothing else in the creation is equal to man; rather, all is inferior to him (Take note of this, evolutionists and animal rights activists.).

The pronouns should also be observed in this passage. *To whom was GOD speaking? Was it the angels? Were angels even in existence at this time?* Angels are not GOD and are greatly inferior to Him, since they were created by GOD.

> "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

GOD was speaking, was in conference, with the other members of the GODHEAD (GOD the Son and GOD the Spirit). The word "GOD" in these verses is ELOHIM. Many use the term *"trinity"* to describe this relationship, but this author prefers the Biblical designation of GODHEAD; cf. Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). It is in their image that human beings were made, not the image of animals or angels, et cetera.

> *"It is significant that man himself is a trinity, having mind, spirit and body"* (Coffman, p. 38).

Another interesting thing about the creation of man, the final creation of GOD, is the word "good." Everything created before human beings was described by GOD as being "good." After human beings were created, GOD describes His creative work as being "very good" (v. 31 — "very" - meod - *"A substantive, adverb, or adjective in function, very, greatly, great, abundance,"* Baker/Carpenter, p. 559).

Gen. 1:28 "And GOD blessed them, and GOD said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

> "And GOD blessed them: and GOD said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in this verse is the fact that GOD "blessed" Adam and Eve. The word "blessed" comes from the Hebrew barakh, which means either to bless or curse. Here it is obviously used in the good sense of the word, to invoke divine care upon one. Both blessings in this chapter appear with regard to reproduction (vv. 22, 28). *What blessing did GOD give the first couple, or one might say, what charge did He give them, for it seems that both are involved?*

"Be fruitful, and multiply" In other words, they were to have babies and many of them (multiply). *Why?* To fill the earth with human beings. In today's language, the word "replenish" gives the wrong idea to its readers. The original word is mawlay, which means *"to fill, be full"* (Strong's).

> *"The King James translation used the term 'replenish,' but this does not suggest the idea of 'refilling,' either the Old English term itself or the Hebrew word from which it is translated. The Hebrew word is male, and means simply 'fill,' 'fulfill,' or 'be filled'"* (Morris, p. 76).

This is the same word used in verse twenty-two, which is translated "fill." Understanding this word eliminates the false idea of any possibility of a "gap." The gap theorists used the KJV "replenish" as evidence of their theory, but study of the Old English word and the Hebrew show it is not possible to get the definition they desire. It should be remembered that the gap theory is evolutionary in scope and is simply another attempt by false scientists to (at the least) diminish the power and authority of GOD.

Second, GOD told them to "subdue it," i.e., subdue the earth, which includes everything on the earth. "Subdue" is from kabas, meaning to bring into subjection, to enslave. GOD assigned man the task of ruling over His creation and controlling it. GOD made man superior to all of the rest of creation — not equal to the creation, not inferior to it. GOD next named all of the creatures found on the earth in general classifications. The order to subdue the whole earth does not give man the right to abuse the earth. He is to use what is there to provide for the needs of himself and his fellow man. He is to use the things found in this world to glorify GOD.

Gen. 1:29-30 "And GOD said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so."

> "And GOD said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so." (ASV)

"herb" — eseb — *"A masculine noun indicating grass, plants, herbs. In a broad sense, it includes all green growth"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 876); *"Herb, herbage"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 793).

"meat" — oklah — *"A feminine noun meaning food or that which is eaten"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 50); *"Devouring, consuming"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 38).

GOD made a world which contained everything man needed to live and to live comfortably. *So what did GOD design to be man's food? What did He design to be food for the animals?*

Considering the definitions shown above, man was given every green thing to eat plus the fruit of the trees. In other words, Adam and Eve were vegetarians. But note, the animals were also given the green things of the earth as their food. They also were all vegetarians. Oh, how this agitates the evolutionists who basically say, *"Everyone knows this could not be, because everyone knows Tyrannosaurus Rex was a flesh eater — why just look at his flesh-eating teeth."* Again, one is faced with a choice: (1) believe GOD or (2) believe human beings. As for this writer, he will take GOD and His word any day over the evolutionary pseudo-scientists.

How long were the animals and man vegetarians? Was it only until the fall of man, or did this requirement continue for many years? If it did, is there a point in which GOD no longer required those who were obedient to Him to eat only fruit and vegetables? Did GOD ever tell man he should eat flesh?

There came a time when "GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Because of all this evil, GOD determined that He would "destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth" (Ibid, v. 7). But there was a man who "was a just man and perfect in his

generations" one who "walked with GOD" (IBID, v. 9). Because of Noah's righteousness, GOD purposed to save Noah and his family from destruction. Noah was instructed to build an ark to save his family and hold enough animals to repopulate the earth. The day finally came when they entered the ark, GOD shut the door, and the flood came. When the flood was over and everyone left the ark, GOD blessed Noah. Then GOD said something strange to Noah and his family.

> "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered" (IBID, 9:2).

Why would every living thing (beast, fowl, fish) fear Noah (man)? Had not GOD placed man over all creatures which were created before him (1:28)? The statement itself shows that, before this time, the creatures of the earth did not fear man. *What changed, or what is about to change?*

> "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (IBID, v. 3).

From this point on, every living thing will be "meat" for mankind. The word "meat" here is the same Hebrew word noticed in Genesis 1:29-30. Now, for the first time, man will eat flesh with GOD's approval.

Gen. 1:31 "And GOD saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

> "And GOD saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." (ASV)

At the end of the sixth day of creation, GOD looked around at all He had made, and His declaration was — "VERY GOOD." Everything had been made to fit perfectly together, and it did. Everything had been made, with the crown of creation being man himself.

Special Study

What does the word "day" mean in chapter one? Could these be long lengths of time, as the evolutionists teach? Or were these twenty-four-hour days like those known in modern times? Is there any way to determine what the word "day" means in this chapter? If it can be demonstrated that the days of Genesis one were twenty-four hour days as seen today, then evolution is proven to be wrong. Further, any form of evolution would be wrong, since evolution demands long periods of time. It should

also be understood that there is no such thing as "theistic evolution." Theistic creation and evolutionary creation are opposites! Theism demands that GOD made everything, while evolution teaches that everything accidentally happened.

The Hebrew word for day in Genesis chapter one is yom. This word is interesting, because it has various possibilities of meaning which are quite different. It may mean a twenty-four-day, a period of time, or even years. Thus, *is there anything about this word which can pinpoint the meaning in Genesis chapter one?* The answer is an unequivocal yes!

First, notice that each time a day is spoken of, it follows the terms "morning" and "evening." *Is there any reason to assume that the use of these terms here is different from how they are used in the rest of the Bible?* No! These two terms occur over one hundred times in the Old Testament and are always used as literal terms. *Why would they be used differently here unless an agenda of some kind were being pushed?*

Second, in the Hebrew language, any time the word yom is used with a number, it always signifies a twenty-four-hour day. Note that, in each verse where the word yom is used in Genesis one, it is always preceded by a number (first day, second day, et cetera).

Third, the plural of yom is yamin. The word yamin can never be used as signifying anything other than multiple twenty-four-hour days. Note the following passages.

> "For in six days (yamin) the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Exodus 20:11).

> "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days (yamin) the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day (yom) He rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17).

Conclusion: With this abundance of proof, anyone who speaks against six literal twenty-four hour days in Genesis chapter one is blaspheming GOD. Personally, this writer does not want to be and does not want anyone else to be in that position.

Genesis — Chapter Two

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

> "And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." (ASV)

"finished" — kalah — *"A primitive root; to end, whether intransitive (to cease, be finished, perish) or transitived (to complete, prepare, consume)"* (Strong's, CD); *"To be completed, finished, accomplished, ready; to be at an end; to be consumed, be destroyed, to vanish; to cease, end; to spend, to destroy; to determine...It is the total task, working until the job is done"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to complete, to accomplish, to end, to finish, to fail, to exhaust. Its primary meaning is to consummate or to bring to completion"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 507); *"To be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, spent"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 477).

Question: should chapter one end at the end of verse three of chapter two? Consider that chapter divisions were not given by GOD, but rather these divisions were made by man.

Here is a simple and comprehensive statement. The terms "heavens" and "earth" are comprehensive in that they include everything to be found in the heavens and earth, as the phrase "and all the host of them" indicates. Further, notice that in the first three verses of this chapter, *"Four times it is said that He finished His work, and three times it is said that this included all His work"* (MacArthur, p. 12). From this point on, there is no more creating, only maintaining that which was created on the six days of Genesis chapter one. GOD stopped creating and declared His work finished!

> "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist (Gr. *"held together"*)" (Colossians 1:16-17).
>
> "His son...by whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:2-3).

This "all" indicates the perfection of GOD's creation. Nothing else needed to be made because of this perfection — it was all "very good" (v. 31).

Gen. 2:2 "And on the seventh day GOD ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made."

> "And on the seventh day GOD finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." (ASV)

"rested" — sabat — *"A primitive root; to repose, i.e. desist from exertion"* (Strong's, CD); *"To repose, (intrans.) to*

desist (from exertion), cease, leave off, rest; to come to an end" (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to repose, to rest, to rid of, to still, to put away, to leave"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1098); *"Cease, be completed"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 991).

"made" — comes from the word asah and simply means *"work, labor, toil"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Some have tried to change the word "seventh" in this verse to "sixth," because they see a problem with the ceasing of GOD's work on the seventh day. They assert that GOD finished His work of creation at the end of the sixth day. It seems to be forgotten that no work is finished until it is declared finished. For example: A painting is not signed by an artist until he is satisfied with it and there is nothing else to be done to it.

In the society of 2016, the word "rest" signifies (first of all) sleep and (second) cessation of work because it is finished. GOD did not rest because He was fatigued, such as man does after laboring. As noted in the Hebrew definitions above, this word simply means that He ceased His creative labors — there was nothing else for Him to do — He had done it all, and all was perfect. It should also be considered that GOD is still in this state of "rest" — nothing new has been created by GOD. Everything has run since day seven according to the laws GOD set in place for nature (also include the new laws He set in place for nature after the flood). Does GOD work today in His providence? Yes. Not in a creative sense, but rather in upholding all things as noted above in Colossians 1:17 and Hebrews 1:3. One should carefully consider the idea of "rest" as it is given in connection to the present passage in Hebrews 4:1-11.

Considering this seventh day, GOD did not appoint this day as the Jewish Sabbath at this time. Later, GOD would give the Jews a day of rest from their physical labors at Mount Sinai, but at this point this was not describing a day of rest for man. There is nothing in the patriarchal portion of the Scriptures to suggest that they were to keep a sabbath rest. Therefore, a sabbath rest is not an eternal law. In the Christian dispensation there is no command for a sabbath rest, therefore, there is no sabbath day in this dispensation.

Gen. 2:3 "And GOD blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which GOD created and made."

> "And GOD blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which GOD had created and made." (ASV)

"sanctified" — qadas — *"A primitive root; to be (causatively, make, pronounce or observe as) clean (ceremonially or morally):--appoint, bid, consecrate, dedicate, defile, hallow, (be, keep) holy(-er, place), keep, prepare, proclaim, purify, sanctify(-ied one, self)"* (Strong's, CD); *"To be clean, make clean, pronounce clean (ceremonially or morally); to hallow, dedicate, consecrate to God, declare as holy, treat as holy; to sanctify, purify, make oneself clean; to be selected; to be pure, be holy, be sacred, be regarded as holy, show oneself holy; to seclude"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to be set apart, to be holy, to show oneself holy, to be treated as holy, to consecrate, to treat as holy, to dedicate, to be made holy, to declare holy or consecrate, to behave, to act holy, to dedicate oneself"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"To set apart, consecrate"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 872).

"created" — This is the bara of chapter one.

The question must be asked, Whose action is spoken of in this passage? Further, would not the action be confined to that one? The rest here is not because of fatigue, but (as noticed already by the definition of the word) it is a desisting of action. What happened here is GOD's declaration that He had completed everything which needed to be done. Therefore, the rest spoken of here is not declared for man — it is GOD's action. GOD sanctified — set apart — this day to signify His completion of His creative acts and to declare it finished. Again this day was not set aside for man but for GOD. In a very real sense, that day of "rest" is still going on for GOD. He no longer creates anything. (Possible exception, the soul of each child when it is conceived.) This writer would maintain that GOD's seventh day has never ended.

Consider that this was recorded during the life of Moses, he being the human author GOD chose to report these matters to man. When did GOD declare that man was to partake in a day of rest on the Sabbath day? Not until the law was given on Sinai to the Israelite people, and the Israelites only — not all men.

> "See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (Exodus 16:29).

Before that time there is not one shred of evidence that GOD required man to rest on the seventh day. Further, it should be recognized that there is no divine command for man to rest on a particular day after the Mosaic law ended. The Sabbath rest was only for the time the Law of Moses was in effect. Why did GOD give the Israelites a day of physical rest — and only the Israelites?

"Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of

Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy GOD commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:15; emphasis mine, RK).

The sabbath rest was given as a memorial of the Egyptian bondage and their deliverance from it by GOD.

"Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from Heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them Thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant" (Nehemiah 9:13-14, emphasis mine, RK).

They did not apparently know about GOD's sabbath rest until He gave them their sabbath rest.

"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:16-17).

Is the seventh day a holy day today? Zerr makes the following point, to which this writer agrees.

"There is no such thing as a holy day except as it pertains to what is done on that day" (p. 3).

This is the same principle with regard to the ground upon which the burning bush was attached. GOD said it was holy ground. Was it holy from that day forward? What made that ground holy? The presence of GOD on that occasion, and that occasion only, made that ground holy.

Note the phrase "created and made." As noted above, the word "created" is bara — to be created from nothing. The word "made" is awsaw — *"to do, fashion, accomplish, make"* (Strong, NTB). What did GOD do? He created the substance from which He fashioned (made) everything that exists.

Gen. 2:4 "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD GOD made the earth and the heavens,"

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah GOD made earth and heaven." (ASV)

"generations" — toledot — *"Descent, i.e. family; (figuratively) history:--birth, generations"* (Strong's, CD); *"It means descent, family, race, history, birth, generation, origin, lineage, family register, record of the family, pedigree, genealogy. It refers to what is produced or*

brought into being by someone, and sometimes the results" (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning a generation. This key Hebrew word carries with it the notion of everything entailed in a person's life and that of his or her progeny. In the plural, it is used to denote the chronological procession of history as humans shape it. It refers to the successive generations in one family; or a broader division by lineage. In Genesis 2:4, the word accounts for the history of the created world"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1217).

Verse four begins a summary of the creation account, with the purpose of giving greater details about parts of that creation. The ideal, great garden will be revealed with its tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Details will be given as to how Eve was created from man. This is all verified by the word "generations," which is used here to indicate a history, short though it is and without many details that man would desire to know of the creation and events surrounding it. In a very real sense, this is telling one the genealogy or origins of the human family as well as the history of the world with man in it — it begins with Adam and Eve. The book of Genesis, according to Coffman and other writers, is divided into ten (perfect number) sections. Each of these sections begins with the word "generations" (toledoths).

> *"The ten toledoths are the following: I, 2:4-4:26, the toledoth of the heavens and the earth; II, 5:1-6:8, the toledoth of Adam; III. 6:9-9:29, the toledoth of Noah; IV, 10:1-11:9, the toledoth of the sons of Noah; V, 11:10-26, the toledoth of the sons of Shem; VI, 11:27-25:11, the toledoth of Terah; VII, 25:12-18, the toledoth of Ishmael; VIII, 25:19-35:29, the toledoth of Isaac; IX, 36:1-37:1, the toledoth of Esau; X, 37-2-50:26, the toledoth of Jacob"* (Moller as Quoted by Coffman, p. 44).

The word "day" deserves attention, in that it is the same word used for "day" in chapter one (YOM). Unlike its use in chapter one, it is not preceded by a number, so it can mean any number of days and thus stands for the seven days of creation.

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

> "And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah GOD had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground;" (ASV)

Here the reader is being led to an interesting detail with

regard to the earth and plants — there was no rain. Further, there was no man to take care of the plants when they were placed on the earth. The evolutionist spends a great deal of time talking about the ancient ones' being hunters and gatherers — but not agriculturist. Why is this mentioned if they were not from the beginning involved in agricultural pursuits? It would seem that this may be talking exclusively about the appearance of plants which would require man's attention, i.e., human cultivation. Leupold thinks the shrubs here may have been plants specifically found in Paradise (p. 113).

> *"The creation of the plants is not alluded to here at all, but simply the planting of the garden in Eden"* (Keil-Delitzsch, p. 77).

> *"Since it had not rained upon the earth and since there was no man to till the ground, it could not be concluded that these plants came up through natural inducement of moisture nor as the result of man's labor"* (Zerr, p. 3).

Another thing of interest is the term "Lord GOD." In the Hebrew, this is *"Yahweh Elohim."* This dual name appears twenty times in chapters two and three and seems to refer to the GODHEAD in a very powerful and personal way.

> *"The name Yahweh means 'he who is' of the Eternal. Yahweh is the covenant name for God in the Old Testament"* (Smith, p. 58).

There seems to be every indication in these first three chapters that man is to come away with the understanding that the GODHEAD was involved in every intimate detail of the creation.

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

> "but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." (ASV)

> "but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground." (NKJV)

One is now told how the earth was watered. It was not by rain which would go down, but rather a "mist" which went up (obviously from the earth). This would probably be like a dew today. How long did this condition last? It is this author's studied belief that this lasted (no rain) until the great flood destroyed the earth. There are others who think that this condition was short-lived.

With regard to no rain falling upon the earth until the flood, one should keep in mind Hebrews 11:7.

> "By faith Noah, being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the

world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (emphasis mine, RK)

What had not been seen before? Rain and floods.

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

"And Jehovah GOD formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (ASV)

"formed" — yasar — *"To mold into a form; especially as a potter; figuratively, to determine (i.e. form a resolution):--X earthen, fashion, form, frame, make(-r), potter, purpose"* (Strong's, CD); *"It means to form, to fashion, to devise, to frame; to produce, to create; to be formed or fashioned; to exist; to be predestined. The word implies initiation as well as structuring. In its part. form it is a potter or a creator"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to form, to fashion, to shape, to devise. The primary meaning of the word is derived from the idea of cutting or framing"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 465); *"Potter, creator"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 427).

"And the LORD GOD formed man of the dust of the ground" As Morris correctly states, this verse tells one about *"the formation and energizing"* of man's body. The Yahweh Elohim, the all-powerful One, the Master craftsman formed man, i.e., He molded him as a potter, as an artist. Man did not happen by chance; he was not haphazardly thrown together by trial and error (chance) — he is the artistic production of a Genius.

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

"Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:15)!

What material was used to create man? The same materials out of which everything physical was made. GOD did not create a special material from which only man was created. How humbling should this be to lowly man.

"What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him" (Job 7:17)?

"What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous" (Job 15:14)?

"LORD, what is man, that Thou takest knowledge of

him! or the son of man, that Thou makest account of him" (Psalm 144:3)!

"All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:15).

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" (1 Peter 1:24).

JFB tells one that scientists have determined that the human body is made up of the following elements which are found all around him in this world.

"Carbon, chlorine, phosphorus, fluorine, nitrogen, magnesium, silicum, aluminium, potassium, sodium, calcium, iron, manganese, titanium, oxygen, hydrogen" (p. 34).

If one has access to JFB, he should read the description of how marvelous the human body is, and thus the artistic ability of The Creator.

"breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" Has one considered that, if GOD had simply formed man, he would be no more than a mountain, or perhaps a better illustration — a statue? GOD did not simply form a beautiful thing to look at, as does a human master craftsman. Try as he might, man can only make something inanimate — without life. GOD gave human beings life — life which is much different from that given to the living things around him. Human life involves more than simply being able to breathe and act on instinct as do the animals.

"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (1 Corinthians 15:39).

What makes the flesh of man (with regard to living) different from the animals is that man, at the time he started breathing, was **also** made a "living soul" — specifically in the image of GOD. That which causes the body of man to return to the dust of the ground, as mentioned above, is not the cessation of breathing — it is the departure of the soul from that body which causes it to stop breathing and return to the dust. In the most technical sense, this cannot be said of animals. Death for human beings is the departure of the soul from the physical body. When the Bible describes the death of Rachel, it says, "it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died)" (Genesis 35:18). When Elijah (by the power of GOD) raised the dead son of the widow of Zerephath, the Bible says, "the soul of the child came <u>into him again</u>, and he revived" (1 Kings 17:22, emphasis mine, RK).

"Let the soul which God has breathed into us breathe after him; and let it be for him, since it is from him. Into his hands let us commit our spirits,

for from his hands we have them" (Henry, p. 7).

One should remember that **the physical body of a man is not the man. The soul which inhabits that body is the man!**

To illustrate the difference between animal life and human beings, simply look at monkeys and their kind. A monkey has a body shaped very much like a human being. He has arms and legs, hands and feet which can grip. He has a brain which allows him to function. Yet, it is very evident that a monkey does not have something a man has. GOD instilled an intelligence in man with the ability to reason and think, particularly in abstraction. If an animal had the same thing instilled in him, he would be able to build complex machinery, schools of education, hospitals for healing, et cetera. But animals have not and cannot build these complex things.

Gen. 2:8 "And the LORD GOD planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed."

> "And Jehovah GOD planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." (ASV)

"eden" — eden — *"Delicate, delight, pleasure"* (Strong's, CD); *"A masculine noun referring to a luxury, a pleasure, a delight"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 808); *"Luxury, dainty, delight"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 726).

Verse eight gives a brief summary of GOD's making the beautiful garden. It should be considered that the garden is called "Eden" and that this does not seem to be a place name but rather a descriptive term, as indicated in the above definitions. Verse nine and following will give a few details about this garden.

Before going any further, this writer would like to make an observation. The liberal elitists have championed the idea for many years that, if society and the environment were perfect, then there would be no problems, no crime, et cetera. They then use their theory to champion the atheistic doctrines of socialism and communism. The world at the time of creation was perfect. There was no crime, no inequality of any kind, and there was plenty of everything to fit every need of man. Yet, crime (sin) entered the world and filled it. Whenever man goes against GOD, the result will be sin, and the more the elite liberals attack GOD's plan for man, the result will only be more evil, because they are evil and their plans are evil.

The garden was made (third day), and then GOD put man into the garden when He created him on the sixth day. This seems to indicate that the garden was more beautiful and luxurious than the world around it. Man's being placed there would seem to indicate that Adam had seen the "regular" world and thus understood the difference between

them — the one to be far more desired than the other.

What does a loving father do for his offspring? Does he not try to provide the best for them? Is that not what GOD did for His "offspring" — man? He provided a place of unsurpassed physical beauty and provisions for him. Further, he apparently spent time with him, talking to him and giving him instruction in the garden. All of man's needs were met.

The garden was planted "eastward." Where is eastward?

> *"The word here rendered 'eastward,' literally means 'from the east, not to the east'"* (Coffman, p. 48),

It would seem to be somewhere east of Canaan or the wilderness through which the Israelites wandered, since Moses was the one instructed to write this history and that is where they were.

> *"Two theories have been advanced: the one puts it at the head of the Persian Gulf; the other, in Armenia, the region east of Asia Minor, the area around Mt. Ararat and Lake Van"* (Crawford, p. 209).

> *"The author seems to be describing the geography of ancient Sumer just north of the Persian Gulf in what is present-day Iraq"* (Smith, p. 59).

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

> "And out of the ground made Jehovah GOD to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (ASV)

"Pleasant" — hamad — *"To delight in:--beauty, greatly beloved, covet, delectable thing, (X great) delight, desire, goodly, lust, (be) pleasant (thing), precious (thing)"* (Strong's, CD); *"To desire, covet, long for; to be desirable, be costly, be precious; to feel delight"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to take pleasure in, to desire, to lust, to covet, to be desirable, to desire passionately. The verb can mean to desire intensely even in its simple stem"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 348); *"Desire, take pleasure in"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 326).

"sight" — mareh — *"A view (the act of seeing); also an appearance (the thing seen), whether (real) a shape (especially if handsome, comeliness)"* (Strong's, CD); *"'To see, look at, inspect.' It is a sight, a vision, a revelation; a mirror, looking–glass"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning a sight, an appearance, a vision"*

(Baker/Carpenter, p. 664).

"knowledge" — daat — *"This noun means knowledge, insight, intelligence, understanding, wisdom, cunning. It is knowledge which was gained through the senses"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning knowledge. Knowing, learning, discernment, insight, and notion"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 245).

The trees spoken of as being used for food are basically an extension of the fact that GOD had made a garden. The important features here seem to be the two special trees which set up the coming narrative with regard to the fall.

The two trees are the "tree of life" and "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." As will later be noted, the tree of life (if partaken of) would have meant that man could have lived forever. Regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Leupold states, *"The second tree is called 'the tree of the knowing of good and evil.' We have used 'knowing' instead of 'knowledge' because the infinitive daath functions chiefly as a verb and takes a double object"* (p. 120). This tree would involve a test for the first man and his wife to determine whether or not they would be obedient to GOD. What the fruit of this tree was is of little importance, even if it is like anything which exists today.

Gen. 2:10-14 "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates."

> "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. The name of the first is Pishon: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth in front of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates." (ASV)

> *"In general, it is evident that the geography described in these verses does not exist in the present world, nor has it ever existed since the Flood. The rivers and countries described were antediluvian geographical features, familiar to Adam...They were all destroyed, and the topography*

and geography completely changed, when 'the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished' (2 Peter 3:6)" (Morris, p. 89).

There is no doubt that the world which existed before the flood was radically different from the world which existed after the flood. Yet, there would have been memories of names and places which easily would have been given or used to describe new places. It has been common practice throughout time, when a great city has been destroyed, for another city to be built later and given the name of the former city. It has also been common for a city to be named after another by those who originally came from that place or want that place to be associated with the original place. They are not the same and may be separated by hundreds or thousands of miles. Thus, it should be recognized that none of the places mentioned in this text (vv. 10-14) can be positively identified and associated with present-day places and names. From human terms and perspective, one of the things seen in these verses is the physical wealth of these places.

The water supply mentioned here is interesting. In the present world (after the flood), there are rivers which flow into one another to make one large waterway. The description in the text shows just the opposite — there was one water source which turned into four (apparently) major rivers.

The items mentioned in this text as "bdellium" and "onyx stone" are unknown. Bdellium has variously been thought to be a gum, ruby, topaz, pearls, et cetera. The onyx stone has been thought to be variously the onyx, sardonyx, beryl, agate, et cetera.

Many today would like to locate the Garden of Eden in what is presently known as the Tigris and Euphrates Valley. While it would be nice to be able to pinpoint an exact location, one should remind himself that none of these places can be specifically identified as being the same place which existed before the flood.

Gen. 2:15 "And the LORD GOD took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. "

"And Jehovah GOD took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." (ASV)

"dress" — abad — *"A primitive root; to work (in any sense); by implication, to serve, till"* (Strong's, CD); *"To serve, be made to serve, be served; work, toil, be worked; to till, plow; to make weary, fatigued; to work as a slave, enslave; to be honored; to worship, cause to worship"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to work, to serve"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 795).

"keep" — shamar — *"A primitive root; properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to, etc.:--bewared, be circumspect, take heed (to self), keep(-er, self), mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save (self), sure, (that lay) wait (for), watch(-man)"* (Strong's, CD); *"To keep, guard...to keep safe, preserve...to protect...to watch (as a watchman of cattle or sheep...to hedge around something (as with thorns); to retain"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to watch, to keep, to preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard. The verb means to watch, to guard, to care for"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1171); *"Keep, watch, preserve"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 1036).

It would do one good to remind himself that this whole chapter is looking back in time to the creation days and giving a few of the details. Yet, the details are vague enough that the time-line cannot be nailed down "minute-by-minute." On the other hand, by the events recorded in coming sections, one can know that Adam was given the task of naming the animals before Eve was created, because in so doing it caused him to realize there was no mate for himself.

It should be noted with care, especially by any welfare state, that **in a perfect environment**, man was never to lie around like a lazy bum — to be idle. Man was given responsibility. He was given work to do — caring for the beautiful garden, guarding it.

> "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; emphasis mine, RK).

Work will be required even for those who will be invited into the portals of Heaven (something for him to **do**). Remember — worship and praise are actions. Thus, very importantly, **man's happiness has always been dependent on his individual activity!** That which GOD created was designed to be cared for by man — it would not be maintained miraculously by GOD. Natural laws were put into place to take care of that which man could not do, and man was assigned to do the rest.

Gen. 2:16-17 "And the LORD GOD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

> "And Jehovah GOD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (ASV)

"surely die" — mut — *"A primitive root: to die (literally or figuratively); causatively, to kill"* (Strong's, CD); *"To die, to kill, slay, bring to death, have one executed"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to die, to kill, to put to death, to execute"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 587).

GOD had previously commanded man to (1) be fruitful and fill the earth, (2) to have dominion over the earth and all that is in it, and (3) to dress and keep the garden. These were all what man calls "positive commands." Now a command of a different kind is given — a command not to do something. Considering all that GOD had done for man, it should not have been hard to obey one "negative" command — after all, it was only one tree from which he was forbidden to eat. The fruit of all the rest of the trees was his for food and enjoyment.

This passage clearly shows that man is a free moral agent. He was not designed to be a robot with no choice — simply programed to obey. Man was given the ability to choose his future. He could obey and live or disobey and die. This then became a test for man, with life or death hanging in the balance.

Death is simply a separation. If one is speaking about physical death, then he is speaking about the separation of the soul from the body. If he is speaking about spiritual death, then he is speaking about the separation which occurs between GOD and man when man sins — "your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD" (Isaiah 59:2). The spiritual separation may be temporary if man repents and seeks forgiveness, or it can become eternal if one never repents. On the day when Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, there were two deaths for man — one was immediate, and the other future. Sin causes an immediate separation from GOD. But the physical process of deterioration and eventual death was also begun. Remember — before they sinned and were thrust away from the tree of life, they could have continued to partake of that tree and lived forever (Genesis 3:22).

In the Hebrew, the phrase "thou shalt surely die" is literally *"dying thou shalt die."* This was calling for man's blood to be shed and for him to die physically. More will be said about this in chapter three where the question will be asked, Why was not man immediately executed when he sinned? For the time being, it is enough to express the meaning of the word.

Another thought which should be explored is the subservient nature of man according to this passage. It

has already been established that GOD made man a ruler over the earth. But he was not without limits. Only a higher authority has the right to place limits on another. Even though man had been placed over the earth and all in it, yet he was himself under the authority of GOD.

> "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is GOD" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

GOD made man and gave him everything; therefore He has the right to command that man and to be obeyed by him.

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

> "And Jehovah GOD said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him." (ASV)

"help" — ezer — *"Aid:--help"* (Strong's, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning a helper, one who helps; help, aid"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 822); *"Help, succor...one who helps"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 740).

"meet" — neged — *"A front, i.e. part opposite; specifically a counterpart, or mate"* (Strong's, CD); *"A preposition indicating before, in front of, opposite; corresponding to"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 704); *"What is conspicuous or in front"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 617).

This verse goes back to the sixth day of creation and gives a little more detail of what happened. It is remembered that that text states the simple facts — the animals were created, and so were Adam and Eve ("them," verse 26). Therefore, when GOD said that it was not good for the man to be alone, it was said before the creation of the woman. After her creation, the entirety of the creation was declared to be "very good."

The first thing noted is that GOD said it was not good for the man to be alone. This clearly refutes the idea that there is some special spiritual advantage in either a man or woman being celibate. This is the general rule for all of mankind, with some exceptions (the apostle Paul).

Since it was not good for man to be alone, GOD said He would make him a "help meet." Why did man need a "help meet," and how would Adam be made aware of this need? In studying the context, it is pretty obvious that man needs a "helper" in order to reproduce. Reproduction was absolutely necessary to populate the earth with human beings, but it was also vital if the redeemer was to be born ("seed of woman"). It was GOD's intent from the very beginning that earth would be filled with all kinds of creatures and human beings. Further, it is also evident that

GOD is a social being, and since man was created in His image, he needed a social counterpart. The second part of the above question is answered in verses nineteen and twenty. He paraded all the animals before Adam to be named by him, and (in so doing) it would be evident that they had their mates but that there was not one for Adam.

> *"Man in the state of being alone is incomplete, unfulfilled, and lacking in much that he was created to be"* (Coffman, p. 54).

Gen. 2:19-20 "And out of the ground the LORD GOD formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him."

> "And out of the ground Jehovah GOD formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in these verses is that the animals were made from the ground. This would also apply to Adam — he was also made from the ground (Genesis 3:23).

The second observation is that all of the animals were brought before Adam so that he could name them. Two things are evident from this: (1) Adam had full speech. It was not something developed over long ages of time. Adam did not start out by using groaning or grunting communications like an animal, which he was not. (2) Adam was made with full intelligence. He had the ability to observe, analyze and make rapid decisions. Further, there is the hint that all created things were inferior to man in the fact that he named them — they were under his dominion (cf. Genesis 1:28).

A third observation has to do with the fact that no animal could fulfill the social or mating needs of a human being. As Adam observed all of these animals going before him, this would have been painfully obvious to him. "there was found no help meet for him" There were none of his kind — what a lonely moment this must have been when Adam realized there was no one for him.

Gen. 2:21-22 "And the LORD GOD caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which

the LORD GOD had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man."

> "And Jehovah GOD caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah GOD had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man." (ASV)

"rib" — sela — *"A rib (as curved), literally (of the body)"* (Strong's, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning side, a side room (chamber), a hillside, a wall"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 954); *"Side"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 854).

"woman" — issah — *"Fem. noun means a woman, a wife"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning woman, wife, or female"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 104).

Here is the first recorded instance of surgery in the Bible. GOD caused Adam to sleep so that He could take part of his body and made (Heb. *"built"*) a woman — a "help meet" for the male of the species. Consider that GOD had made man from the dirt, but woman was not made from the ground — her substance was taken from the man. From where did GOD take this substance? From the side of Adam. The Hebrew word rendered "rib" should have been rendered *"side,"* as the above lexicon studies show (Of the many times this original word is found in the Bible, this is the only time it is rendered rib in the English.). This would have included bone, flesh, and blood. Note that when Eve was presented to Adam he did not say, *"This is now bone of my bone."* He said, "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (v. 23). Because of this operation of GOD, literally the first husband and wife were one flesh. Would this mean their DNA was the same?

> "Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33, emphasis mine, RK).

The first man did not come from a woman, but all men thereafter have come from a woman. When the Lord came in human form, He came from a woman. The woman was brought, taken, built from the man. Literally then, all of the human race has descended from one individual.

> "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man" (1 Corinthians 11:8).

One should further consider that the above passage is in a context teaching that a woman is to be in subjection to her head — man. This verse mirrors what is found in First Timothy 2:12-13 as to why a woman is not to usurp authority over the man.

> "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:12-13).

What is the possible significance of the phrase, *"brought her unto the man?"* Her Father has given her in marriage — "one flesh" (v. 24). One would do well who is contemplating marriage, or who is married, to study carefully all of the things said in GOD's word about it and the relationships which are to be sustained in marriage, and those not to be sustained.

Much time and energy have been devoted over the years to talk about the importance of the woman's being taken from the side of man. Those who do so make long dissertations about her not being taken from his head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be his slave. It is this writer's studied view from the context and the rest of the Scriptures, that while this sounds good and makes a good analogy, it has nothing to do with this text. The rest of the Bible sets forth her role in all of her human relationships. The present text deals simply with how she was made and the fact that she was built to be Adam's mate and companion.

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

> "And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (ASV)

The first thing noticed here is the close physical nature of the first man and woman. Their DNA would seem to be the same. It was from his exact flesh and bones that the "material" was taken to "build" her.

"she shall be called Woman because she was taken from the man" The similarity of the terms for "man" and "woman" are noted, with the term "woman" obviously connecting her to that from which she came — man. In the Hebrew, the root words here are ISH for man and ISHA for woman. Several of the writers point out that the term ISHA means *"to be soft"* whereas ISH refers to *"rule"* (Leupold, MacArthur).

> *"Isha is used as a term of reproach to men who are weak, cowardly, or effeminate (see Isaiah 19:16; 3:12; Nahum 3:13; etc."* (Keith Mosher).

This being the case, the word isha would be used of a man who allows his wife to make the decisions in a family — usurping his GOD ordained authority.

Gen. 2:24-25 "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

> "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they

were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (ASV)

"cleave" — dabaq — *"A primitive root; properly, to impinge, i.e. cling or adhere"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to cling to, join with, stay with"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 222); *"Cling, cleave, keep close"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 179).

The Greek word from the quotation of these verses in Matthew 19:5 is a stronger word than the one used here. προσκολλάω — *"To glue one thing to another"* (Zodhiates, CD).

When Jesus' words in Matthew 19:5 are read, it is clear that these words are GOD's words — not Adam's. It was GOD who gave one woman to one man — this was not Adam's rule. It is also GOD's law as to the role of each, and it was His rule from the beginning.

> "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:11-13).

Second, GOD decreed that a man (when married) was to leave, separate himself from his parents physically, psychologically, and economically. This is not necessarily an easy thing to do. These are the people who gave one birth, cared for him when he could not help himself, taught him lessons he needed to know, et cetera. It does not mean that he is no longer to care about or for his parents.

> "Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free" (Mark 7:10-11).

It does mean that one is to leave the home of his parents in order to establish his own home and be the head of that home (His parents or in-laws are not to rule his house — nor are the children to rule it when they come along.) . It means that his mate is to have priority over any other family member. It means that he is to devote his life, loyalty and energy to his mate. As noted above in the Greek passage, a husband and wife are to be "glued together" in an unbreakable bond.

"they were both naked" There are two things to be seen in verse twenty-five. (1) The innocency of this first pair in the garden. There was no need for any shame, because there was no sin. (2) In order for them to live in this "nude" condition, the climate had to be extremely mild, i.e., tropical. The mention of their being naked may not seem to be important but will be seen to be so in the next chapter.

The stage is set for the fall of man. There was a perfect garden where every need was fulfilled — yet, man would not stay in that garden, and it was by his own choice.

Genesis — Chapter Three

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

> "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah GOD had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath GOD said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" (ASV)

"When did Satan become evil?" The Bible shows that he was cast down into the earth (Revelation 12:9). Since Genesis 1:31 says that the earth and everything in it were very good, then the Devil (being very evil) could not have been there. He does not appear on the scene until this present text. This would lead this writer to believe that he sinned and was cast out of Heaven between Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 3:1.

Another question which naturally arises from this text is *"Who or what was the serpent?"* The Hebrew here is nahas meaning *"A snake (from its hiss):--serpent"* (Strong's, CD); *"A hissing creature, a serpent, a snake"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning snake"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 725); *"Serpent. Viper"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 638). The first indication was that the serpent was a snake, but that is not the end of the story. One would then ask, *"How could the 'snake talk'?"* If there were no more information than what is given here, one would be left to theorize about how this could be. Fortunately, there is more information in Revelation 12:9; 20:2 which helps one's understanding.

> "The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

> "He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years."

The word "bound" is δέω — *"literally or figuratively bind, be in bonds, knit, tie"* (Strong). Since Satan is in bonds does he have any freedom of activity? In Job 1:6, GOD summoned Satan before Him and asked where he had been. Satan answered that he had been "going to and fro in the earth" and "walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7). What had he been doing while wandering in the earth? No doubt he was "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Thus, if a physical serpent was used, Satan apparently spoke through him, just as later one sees the ass speak to his master, Balaam (Numbers 22:28). It was also possible for demons to inhabit human bodies during the age of the miraculous (Luke 8:33). Further, notice that they could

speak through a man (Luke 8:30-31). It could be that the Devil transformed himself to appear as a serpent, much like he transforms himself to appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Truly, Satan made himself appear as an angel of light to Eve.

What characteristic did the serpent have? He "was more subtil than any beast of the field." "Subtil" is arum meaning *"Cunning (usually in a bad sense):--crafty, prudent, subtil"* (Strong's, CD); *"It means cunning, crafty, sly, subtle; prudent"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"An adjective meaning crafty, shrewd, sensible. This adjective can have either a positive or negative connotation"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 870).

> "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11, emphasis mine, RK).
>
> > "devices" — νόημα — *"perception i.e., purpose, or (by implication) the intellect, disposition...device, mind, thought"* (Strong).
>
> "Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil" (Ephesians 6:11, emphasis mine, RK).
>
> > "Wiles" — μεθοδεία — *"cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery"* (Strong).

"Yea, hath GOD said" Satan first of all attacked GOD's word. GOD had given His command, His law — Satan was trying to undermine GOD's word. Second, He was attacking the goodness of GOD. GOD had provided for man and allowed him to eat of all of the trees of the garden with the exclusion of only one. Satan was trying to plant seeds of doubt about the goodness and integrity of GOD. If Satan is successful in planting a seed of doubt in the mind of man, then that man will begin to fall, just like Peter began to sink when he began to doubt (Luke 5:7). Satan has always approached man with the objective of getting him to doubt the word of GOD as being in his best interests or of being accurate. He wanted and succeeded in getting Eve to question whether GOD really did tell them this fruit was forbidden.

Why did GOD allow Eve to be tempted? Further, why does He allow temptations to continue to afflict man? Because GOD can only have someone worship Him and be faithful to Him by his own free choice. This truth demands tests to allow man (who was given a free will) to choose his path.

> *"To do what God desires merely because one cannot do otherwise, has no moral value"* (Leupold, p. 145).

Why did Satan choose to approach Eve? Why not Adam? Could it have anything to do with the Spirit telling Peter that she was the "weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7)? Did

Satan thus recognize her as possibly being the easier one to deceive? The present verse shows the first mistake Eve made in this affair — she continued to listen to Satan. As soon as Satan began questioning GOD's word, she should have walked away — instead she stood and listened.

> "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1, emphasis mine, RK).

Who does GOD say is the blessed man? The one who does not walk, does not continue, in the counsel of the ungodly. Counsel is given through words, and *who can be a more ungodly conveyor of these kinds of words than the Devil himself?* It would also seem that Eve was chosen as Satan's target from the standpoint that Adam would be approachable through her. *What would have happened if she had been by Adam's side when Satan approached her? Would the two of them together have successfully withstood him — drawing strength from each other?*

Gen. 3:2-3 "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, GOD hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

> "And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, GOD hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." (ASV)

Eve's fall can be listed in seven steps, of which the first is seen in these verses. The first step was that she listened, but it is not simply that she listened — she **continued to listen**.

Did Eve know and understand GOD's law? There can be no doubt that she did understand it, because she told Satan what had been said. Yet, note what Paul said in First Timothy 2:14 about Eve and this incident.

> "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Paul's words no doubt refer to the entire incident and not simply the beginning of it.

Much has been made by commentators of Eve's saying they could not touch the fruit. They assert that she added to GOD's word here. This author has a question to consider — *Was the original statement a shortened version, and this detail was added later, much like the added details of chapter two from the shortened version in chapter one?* There is also much discussion about her saying they could "eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden," instead of saying they could eat from every tree save one. Those who note this say she was diminishing

the word of GOD. In total, these commentators accuse Eve of adding to and taking away from GOD's word without adequate evidence.

> "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, GOD shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

Both actions would obviously be sin. *But did she do this, or is more information being given to the readers of this text?*

Regarding the "touching" of the forbidden fruit, it would seem obvious to this writer that the only purpose for touching that fruit was if one were planning on eating it.

Again, the first step away from GOD was continuing to listen to Satan. At the very first, she should have walked away from, — **no - run from him**. What if Joseph had hung around Mrs. Potiphar instead of running so that he could not hear more of what she had to say.

Another thing some assert is that Eve softened the consequences for eating this fruit. The argument is this: GOD said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," whereas Eve said "lest ye die." The term "surely die" is one word in the Hebrew — mut, meaning *"to die, to kill, to put to death, to execute"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 587). GOD simply said, "In the day you eat you will be put to death." The word "lest" is pen, which means *"lest, so that, not"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 905). In the context, it seems that Eve is simply saying that GOD said, *"If you wish to prevent dying, then do not eat of this tree."*

Gen. 3:4-5 "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For GOD doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

> "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for GOD doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as GOD, knowing good and evil." (ASV)

"know" — yada — *"A primitive root; to know (properly, to ascertain by seeing); used in a great variety of senses, figuratively, literally, euphemistically and inferentially (including observation, care, recognition; and causatively, instruction, designation, punishment, etc.)"* (Strong's, CD); *"To perceive, understand, acquire knowledge, know, discern; be acquainted with a woman (in a sexual way, i.e., sexual intercourse); be known, make oneself known, cause*

to know; to be familiar; to be aware of; to appear; to inform; to announce; to reveal oneself; to appoint; to order. This is one of the most important Hebrew roots in the OT. It expresses a broad variety of meanings about various types of knowledge which are gained through the senses" (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to know, to learn, to perceive, to discern, to experience, to confess, to consider, to know people relationally, to know how, to be skillful, to be made known, to make oneself known, to make to know"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 420); *"Indicate, announce, narrate...know, learn to know...have knowledge, be wise"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 394).

Eve was still listening, only now she was not listening to a hint of untruth — but a flat-out lie. One should notice the progression. Satan began by hinting that GOD is not good — he did not simply say GOD was not good. When she listened to his hints he boldly declared that GOD had lied to them. Satan accused GOD of being what he himself really was. Notice what Jesus said to the false religious leaders of His day (and which could as easily be said to the same today).

> "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Satan always promises man great blessings for disobeying GOD, but the blessings never come. Instead of blessings, Satan delivers curses and destruction. Further, remember from whence Satan's attacks began — GOD's word. That is exactly how every religious errorist (appearing to be angels of light) begins his work of undermining faith and drawing disciples after himself.

In verse five, Satan implied that GOD was afraid they would learn enough to become like Him, and He did not want them to be like Himself. Satan was therefore saying that GOD was knowingly and purposely withholding something good from them, something that would benefit them. This was part of Satan's original problem, *was it not*? He wanted to be like GOD with the power of GOD, i.e., he thought he could take GOD's place.

Did Adam and Eve come to know good and evil after they ate of the forbidden fruit? Yes, but they did not become divine, as Satan implied they would. Notice then that Satan often mixes truth with error to achieve his goals of corrupting man. He even did this when tempting Jesus in Matthew chapter four. In the sentence "Ye shall not surely die," only twenty percent of the sentence is a lie — but that twenty percent makes the whole sentence a lie. *Do not Satan's ministers do the same thing today?* Many

times what they say is true and good, but it is the tiny amount of error which makes the whole thing error. *Would you drink a twenty ounce bottle of a soft drink if you knew I put one little drop of poison in it?*

> *"The meaning is not, 'ye will not die;' but, ye will positively not die"* (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 95).

Satan told Eve there was no danger in violating GOD's laws, but he knew from experience that that was not true.

One should also note another tactic which Satan used here, and which is used all the time by those who would deny GOD's principles of justice. He implied that GOD is harsh and unloving. He implied that GOD could not really have meant that they would be punished so severely for eating this *"little piece of fruit,"* i.e., he implied that the punishment far outweighed the crime. *How many are heard today saying things like, "Surely a loving Father in Heaven would never punish one with eternal Hell for violating one of his laws — I could never do something like that to my children?"* Another way of stating what Satan was saying is simply — *"GOD does not mean what He says; He will really let you do whatever you think is right."* If nothing else is learned from this account in Genesis three, it should be this — **GOD has always meant what He says!** The punishment is not disproportionate, because GOD announced it beforehand.

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

> "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." (ASV)

Here is the second step in the fall of Eve — she looked. *What caused David to sin in Second Samuel chapter eleven?* It was not that he happened to see this nude woman, but that he kept on looking at her instead of looking away and dismissing this from his mind. As he looked, he obviously came to desire having her, and thus committed adultery. The idea here is not that Eve looked at the forbidden fruit, but that she kept on looking at it and came to desire it.

That is the third step in Eve's fall — she desired what she was looking at. The word which is often used in the Scriptures to designate desire is the English word "lust." Too often, those with minds inclined toward that which is evil look at this word as signifying something dirty (especially sexual in nature). This word can and is used in

the Scriptures to signify that which is good or evil. The context must determine its use.

She violated the three cardinal rules which lead men to sin, which are found clearly enumerated in First John 2:15-17.

> "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust (desire) of the flesh, and the lust (desire) of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust (desire) thereof: but he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever" (emphasis mine, RK).

It is through these three avenues and only these avenues which all sin comes.

Eve now took the fourth step in her fall — she acted on her desire. *So what did Eve do?* She gave in to all three avenues through which sin comes. Lust of the flesh — the tree was good for food. Lust of the eye — pleasant (Heb. *"a desire"*) to the eyes. Pride of life — make one wise.

> "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).

> *"Physically the tree was appealing for it was 'good for food.' Because it was 'pleasing to the eye,' the tree had aesthetic appeal. Intellectually the tree enticed Eve because she saw that it had potential 'for making one wise'"* (Smith, p. 68).

Then Eve took the fifth step in her fall — she enticed another to join her in sin. She took the fruit to Adam and encouraged him to eat, which he did. In First Timothy 2:14, it is noted of Adam's transgression that "Adam was not deceived." This would indicate that he knew exactly what he was doing, that he deliberately took the fruit and ate it — therefore his actions were inexcusable. Since he was not deceived it indicates why Satan did not approach Adam first.

Did Adam love Eve more than he loved GOD? He did what she wanted him to do, even though he knew it violated GOD's law, he did it.

> "If any man come to Me, and hate not (love less, RK) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26).

How is it revealed that one loves his relative(s) more than GOD? To whom does he listen, and whose directions does he follow?

Gen. 3:7 "And the eyes of them both were opened, and

they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

> "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (ASV)

"aprons" — hagorah — *"A belt (for the waist):--apron, armour, gird(-le)"* (Strong's, CD); *"A feminine noun referring to a sash, a belt, a girdle, a loincloth, loin coverings. It refers to a loincloth of fig leaves as the first covering of humankind"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 313); *"Belt, girdle"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 292).

Satan had promised them knowledge, but it did not turn out the way they thought it would. Instead of knowledge which made them feel good and helpful, the knowledge gained was guilt and feelings of shame. When their eyes were opened, they went from being totally innocent to being ashamed enough to try to hide their nakedness. *Before whom would they feel this shame caused by their nakedness?* It would not and should not be from each other. Instead, it would be from the eyes of anyone else. Since there was not another human being as yet on the earth besides themselves, this would initially have to be from the presence of GOD. That this is true is seen in the verses following, when GOD came into the garden to talk with them. Husbands and wives have no need to feel shame before each other because of nakedness — they were made for each to enjoy the other (otherwise GOD would have had them clothed when he introduced them). They now felt guilt for the first time, and this indeed is something Satan brings to every man who follows him.

> *"All contentions of anthropologists that shame is rather the outgrowth of inhibitions and custom fall away as secondary and incidental"* (Leupold, p. 154).

> *"Are not tendencies in dress toward nudity in our time, and the actual practice (and defense of the practice) of nudity, further indications of modern man's desperate attempt to reduce himself to the level of the brute"* (Crawford, Vol. 2, p. 113)?

Adam and Eve's eyes were opened, i.e., they now had understanding of what it meant to sin. Their consciousness of sin and its consequences had dawned upon them.

Their new knowledge caused them to want to hide their nakedness from GOD. *How did they try to remedy the situation?* By making girdles (or more accurately, loincloths) for themselves. As will later be seen, GOD said this was inadequate.

Surely the idea of "be as gods" disappeared from the imagination of Eve's mind and instead was replaced by the

realization of being nothing more than a frail human being.

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

> "And they heard the voice of Jehovah GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah GOD amongst the trees of the garden." (ASV)

A common thought among most is that GOD's walking in the garden was a common thing each evening.

> *"The almost casual way in which this is remarked indicates that this did not occur for the first time just then"* (Leupold, p. 155).

GOD came to commune with Adam and Eve, but they try to hide from Him. Their sin separated them from the sweet communion they had previously enjoyed with Him.

> "Your iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

Here is the second result of sin and the sixth step in Eve's sin — they tried to hide from GOD. Before, they had enjoyed GOD's company, but now they tried to avoid Him.

> *"Shame, remorse, fear, a sense of guilt — feelings which they had never experienced till now, disordered their minds, and led them to shun Him whose approach they used to welcome"* (JFB, p. 54).

How foolish it is for man to think that he can hide from GOD.

> "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3).

Jonah thought he could flee to a foreign land and GOD would not know where he was (or what he did). *Christian, when you are on vacation or away from home for any reason, do you think (because the brethren do not know what you are doing) that GOD does not know, either?*

> "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:24).

> *"Note the realistic psychological process exhibited here: from sin to guilt, from guilt to shame, from shame to fear, and from fear to flight"* (Crawford, p. 119).

Do men try to hide from GOD today?

> *"Men still try to hide from God by turning away from Bible reading, forsaking worship services, and by pretending to be so busy that they have no time for thoughts of God"* (Coffman, p. 65).

What caused their fear? They were like children, or even adults, who had done something wrong. They knew they had done wrong, and that discovery by authority was near. In other words, human conscience had been awakened. Before disobedience, their consciences were clear of any guilt, just as Paul's was as he executed Christians and cast them into prison. Since they had done what was right, or in Paul's case what he truly believed was right, there was no consciousness of sin. Once they sinned, their awakened consciences condemned them.

> "Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before GOD until this day" (Acts 23:1).

The Bible teaches that GOD is light (1 John 1:5). The Light walked in the garden to commune with His creation. But they wanted to avoid the Light. One of the first consequences of sin is the desire to hide from the light and avoid those which are striving to obey GOD.

> "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

Gen. 3:9-10 "And the LORD GOD called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

> "And Jehovah GOD called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (ASV)

No doubt Adam had previously looked forward to those times in the cool of the day when his Creator had come to the garden. But things had changed — they had violated His law; they had become transgressors. They now had consciences which told them that they had sinned. Because of this knowledge, they tried to hide from GOD. Since the time when sin entered the world, man has foolishly thought he could hide his sins from GOD, but as shown in previous comments, this simply cannot be done.

When GOD called out to His creation, Adam quickly realized that he could not hide himself from GOD. Men have foolishly implied that, because GOD asked where Adam and Eve were, man can hide from GOD. But GOD knew all along. It is very much like a human father who knows the wrong his child has done, but he asks him if he did the wrong to bring forth accountability and admission of

the wrong done. GOD was leading Adam to explain why he considered himself naked. *How did GOD know?* Note the following passage from Psalm 139, where the Bible plainly declares that man cannot escape GOD's knowledge of his whereabouts.

> "O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:1-16).

> "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

As a side note, those who fantasize about the child in the womb as being less than human should carefully consider what the Spirit directed to be written in Psalm 139. The Spirit told the psalmist to declare that, before he was perfected, GOD knew him. Before his members were fashioned, GOD knew him and wrote him in His book.

One of the things which appears evident in this context is that, before sin, nudity was nothing to be ashamed of. After sin entered the world, it became wrong for anyone to appear nude before anyone other than his/her husband or wife (that excludes things like medical care, and yet even

in that situation there should be an element of embarrassment which should exist). Young children before their parents would be another exception, yet, it is not long before young children will try to hide their nakedness.

The Hebrew word for "naked" in this text means without clothes. According to Webster's dictionary there is sometimes a subtle difference in the words "naked" and "nude." "Naked" means scantily clad (Example: a bikini-clad person), and "nude" means without any clothing at all. This distinction is also seen in John 21:7, where Peter and his friends were fishing. When the Lord came and Peter recognized who He was, the Bible says he put on his "fisher's coat," which the Greek shows was the *"outer garment." Why did he do this?* He still had the inner garment on. The text says because he was "naked." Since the fisher's coat was an outer garment, not the inner garment, Peter was partially clothed and thus naked. In the garden of Eden, as will be seen later, Adam and Eve were partially clothed ("fig leaves," "apron," "loin cloth"), and GOD said that was not sufficient.

Why does a person hide? Is it not fear which motivates one to hide either himself or what he is doing? Does he not often hide because of shame? Thus, one of the first results of sin is to bring something into the world that did not exist before — fear and shame. Like most human beings since, when caught with his hand in the cookie jar, Adam did not immediately admit his sin; he started trying to avoid the real issue.

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

> "And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (ASV)

Some questions which interest this writer are *What would have happened if Adam had simply admitted his sin at the very beginning? What if he had not tried to make any excuses? What if instead he had immediately asked for forgiveness? Would the punishment have been different?* Consider the mercy and grace of GOD in this equation.

"Who told thee that thou was naked?" This question would cause Adam to reflect upon what had changed and why it had changed. True reflection would have caused Adam to realize that it was his own actions which had caused this understanding. He would have accepted responsibility.

"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" If this writer had been

there, he believes (at the very least) that the thought would have passed through his mind — ***"He knows what I have done!"*** In this question, one should note the directness of GOD — let us get to the heart of the matter. This is an example of how man should deal with sin, first in his own life and second when trying to get another to leave sin and accept salvation. Unfortunately, man wants to beat around the bush as if he is ashamed to uncover sin and help the sinner overcome it.

It cannot be over emphasized that GOD knows every action which each individual commits in this life. Further, He knows the intent of every action and every thought which man has. Man MUST have a constant awareness of these facts.

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

> "And the man said, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (ASV)

The society in which one lives today is very familiar with the game which unfolds in these verses — the blame game. Few want to take responsibility for his actions, and such has been true from the very beginning, as evidenced by verses twelve and thirteen. In trying to find someone else to blame for their sins, Adam and Eve were trying to justify themselves. There is another word which should be considered in the excuses which were made — coward. *Is not cowardice one of the reasons why one will not admit his sins?* Sin cannot be justified by excuses.

> *"It is according to human nature to justify one's own conduct by hiding behind another"* (Zerr, p. 6)

Who does Adam blame for his sin? First, Adam tries to blame Eve. It is true that she was deceived and that she first ate the fruit. It is true that she brought the fruit to Adam, and he then ate it. But he did not have to take it — he did not have to eat it — he could have refused to sin. But he did not! Now he wanted to try to escape GOD's displeasure and the punishment he deserved by blaming Eve. He blamed the one whom GOD gave him as his "helpmeet" — the "weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7). *Where is the self-sacrificing kind of love commanded by GOD from a loving husband for his wife?*

> "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

Adam was willing to abandon her if it would allow him to escape GOD's wrath.

Second, Adam tried to blame GOD for the predicament he had made for himself. His response is, *"GOD, if you*

had not given me this woman then I would not have sinned — therefore it is your fault that I sinned."

> "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15).

When man violates GOD's will (His commands), it is only because that man desires to do what he was told not to do. **When any man sins, he has no one to blame but himself!**

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

> "And Jehovah GOD said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (ASV)

After hearing Adam's excuses for his sin, GOD immediately turned to Eve and asked her what she had to say for herself. Eve correctly admitted that she had been deceived by the serpent, trying to lay the blame on him. While this was correct, it did not take away the guilt of allowing herself to be deceived. The Bible often warns man to be on guard and not allow himself to be deceived.

> "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them" (Deuteronomy 11:16).

Obadiah states that pride of heart is what allows or causes a man to be deceived.

> "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee" (Obadiah 1:3).

Jesus warned His disciples not to allow themselves to be deceived by a false Christ.

> "Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them" (Luke 21:8).

Consider other warnings about being deceived:

> "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

> "Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

The result of one's being deceived is also seen in his final destiny.

> "The Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake

of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

It must be remembered that, though the temptation is offered, no one can make another sin, not even the Devil (James 1:14). GOD gave man a free will, and that makes him a creature with choice and responsibility.

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

"And Jehovah GOD said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:" (ASV)

After hearing Eve's answer, GOD next turned and addressed Satan. He told the serpent that he was cursed above all other creatures. *If the serpent was taken over by Satan, why was the serpent cursed in this way?* Morris believes that it was done to remind man of the instrument used for his fall. Some have supposed that the serpent had previously walked upright like a man and could talk — but this is pure speculation. Whatever had previously been the case, the serpent would now crawl on its belly. This is interesting when one considers that GOD told those under the law of Moses that anything which went on its belly was an abomination.

"Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination" (Leviticus 11:42).

It might also be considered that later GOD decreed that animals which killed a man were to be put to death. *Why? Could it have something do with the superiority of man to the animals, and that he is to have dominion over them?*

"If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death" (Exodus 21:28-29).

"The devil's instruments must share in the devil's punishments. Thus the bodies of the wicked, though only instruments of unrighteousness, shall

partake of everlasting torments with the soul, the principal agent" (Henry, p. 11).

"The blameworthiness of the serpent which appears here requires the understanding, either that the serpent is truly identified as Satan, or that the curse fell upon Satan's instrument as an instruction both for Satan and for mankind of the inherent disaster inevitably associated with Satan's use of anything whatsoever" (Coffman, p. 66).

It would seem that the imagery in this verse helps one see the image in the next better. It is not uncommon for someone to stomp on the head of a serpent which crawls on its belly in order to kill it. One should note that GOD addressed Satan here as a serpent.

It is noted that GOD did not ask the serpent why he had tempted Eve. He did not have to, because He knew that Satan hated Him and would destroy Him or anything which belonged to Him if he could. Satan had no one he could try to blame for what he had done.

Another thing which is to be considered in this context is the punishment of both the enticed and the one used to entice another to sin. The one who actually commits the sin is punished, but so also is the one who encourages another to sin.

Another thing which should always be remembered about these passages is the underlying point that a curse is on the one behind the scenes — Satan, who is called a serpent (Revelation 12:9). It is he who recruits and is behind the physical agents who tempt men to sin.

Of what is a serpent an emblem? ὄψις — *"A type of sly cunning, an artful malicious person"* (Strong, NTB).

Gen. 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

"and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." (ASV)

"enmity" — eybah — *"Hostility:--emnity, hatred"* (Strong'S, CD); *"To be an enemy, to be hostile to, to treat as an enemy, to hate"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning hostility, animosity, or ill will"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 41); *"Enmity, personal hostility"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 33).

"seed" — zera — *"It means seed, grain, sowing, crop; offspring, issue, progeny, posterity, family, race"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning sowing, seed, descendants, offspring, children, and posterity"*

(Baker/Carpenter, p. 304).

Morris has an interesting take on what has happened in this text. He believes that Satan had won a great battle in getting man to sin and probably thought he now owned Eve and her husband. She had controlled her husband contrary to GOD's will — now he must have felt that they belonged to him. But, as is discovered, this was not the case. Not only did they not belong to him, but there would be hostility between the woman (and her seed) and Satan (and his seed). It would be a miraculous birth (of her seed only) which would bruise the head of Satan, i.e., deliver the death-blow to Satan. Now the absolute rule is laid down that a woman's husband would rule over her and that her desire would be to her husband (Morris, p. 119). When GOD's rule is not followed, only heartache and failure will come upon that household.

This verse is the first promise given to man of a coming Savior. Before this time, man did not have need of a Savior. Now, immediately after his sin, GOD tells mankind of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, one should not forget that this plan had been devised before the world was created.

> "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:19-20).

Since GOD had planned for a Savior before the world began it shows He had never intended to physically kill them if they ate of the forbidden tree.

Another thing which is predicted here is the constant struggle which will exist between good and evil. It is a constant fight between GOD's people and those who belong to Satan. The battle will never end until time itself is no longer. But be assured, the Seed of woman (Christ) defeated Satan, giving him a death blow, "buise thy head."

> "The GOD of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Romans 16:20).

> "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

> "The Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

It seems to be poetic justice that the one whom Satan first attacked and defeated (a woman) would give birth to the One (Christ) who would ultimately and utterly defeat him. When Christ died on the cross, it appeared for a time that Satan had won. However, He triumphantly came forth from that tomb, delivering the death blow to Satan.

> "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Note that the particular woman who would bear the One who would deliver Satan's death blow was not named. Neither was a time set for this to happen.

> "When the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Every time a male child was born, the question could have been asked, *Is this the One? Since Satan would be looking for the One who would destroy him, how was it that Mary, Elizabeth and Joseph could be told that Mary would bare this child without Satan's knowing it?* The answer must be that Satan does not know everything. *If he had, does it not seem reasonable that he would have done everything he could to keep Christ from being born in the first place?* If Satan did not know, it shows the power GOD has over Satan to keep him in the dark about what He would do. Remember, angels and prophets desired to know these things but did not.

> "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Most of the text of chapter three (verses 1-14) is terribly sad and disheartening. But verse fifteen is different. It is full of hope, for it predicts the victory which can be achieved and will be accomplished through Christ. In the midst of man's defeat is the proclamation that he can obtain victory through his Savior.

> "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

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

> "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (ASV)

"desire" — tesuqah — *"Stretching out after; a longing:--desire"* (Strong's, CD); *"It means stretching out after, a yearning, a longing, a desire"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning longing. It was used to describe the strong feelings of desire that one person had for another"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1251); *"Longing"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 1003).

"rule" — masal — *"To rule:--(have, make to have) dominion, governor, X indeed, reign, (bear, cause to, have) rule(-ing, -r), have power"* (Strong's, CD); *"To rule, reign, govern, have dominion; to manage"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb denoting to rule, to reign, or have dominion over"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 683); *"Rule, have dominion, reign"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 605).

After addressing Satan, GOD turned to the woman and stated some of the consequences of her sin which directly apply to her. Instead of leaning on her husband for advice and encouragement, she had taken it upon herself to act independently of her husband to make a spiritual decision. Her nature is such that she can be more easily preyed upon, and thus Satan went to her first and deceived her. Satan always attacks at the weakest point of man, and so it was on this occasion. There is little doubt that, if she had gone to Adam with the information given to her by Satan, the decision on this occasion would have been different.

> "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14).

Adam was not deceived, i.e., he knew exactly what he was doing. *Why did he go along with Eve? Could it have anything to do with the fact that he knew there was no other helpmeet for him, and he did not want to lose what he had?* If so, then it shows a lack of faith in not believing GOD could or would provide another helpmeet for him. It was the woman who was deceived (Gr. - *"seduced into error"*). Because she had allowed herself to be seduced into sin, her husband would rule over her. Note that the husband **rules over his own wife**.

> "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22, emphasis mine, RK).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Colossians 3:18).

One should be reminded that the instructions regarding a woman's not usurping authority over the man come all the way back to the present passage under consideration.

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:11-14).

The Bible is very clear that, in both the home and the church, the male is to rule over the affairs. And let it be clearly stated that he MUST RULE according to GOD's dictates — not his own whims or society's standards. When man rules as GOD would have him rule, and his wife is submissive to that rule, she will reach her greatest happiness and fulfillment in the role that GOD has given her. This is also true of men. When men submit to the role GOD has given them they too will reach the heights of happiness and fulfillment.

"Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence" (Henry, p. 12).

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception" There is no doubt that GOD talked about procreation in this verse. At the time of birth, a woman indeed has a great deal of sorrow and pain, just as GOD predicted. After the birth, she has a joy which is amazing to behold.

"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21).

Every time a Christian woman gives birth, it should remind her of the blessings GOD has bestowed upon her and draw her closer to Him. That birth should also draw her closer to her husband.

"thy desire shall be to thy husband" As noted above in the definitions of the word "desire," this indicates a strong yearning for her husband. A woman who accepts the role GOD has given her will yearn for her husband's companionship in every way.

"She who sought to strive apart from man and to act independently of him in the temptation finds a continual attraction for him to be her unavoidable lot" (Leupold, p. 172).

JFB points out that some believe the understanding of this should be, *"Although in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, yet thy desire or longing shall be to thy husband"*

(p. 58).

> "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33).

A woman will gladly submit to her husband's leadership when he follows the leadership of the Lord. When he treats her as a queen, she will have no trouble recognizing him as her king.

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

> "And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;" (ASV)

"hearkened" — sama — *"To hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc."* (Strong's, CD); *"To hear with attention or obedience; to give undivided listening attention"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to hear, to obey, to listen, to be heard of, to be regarded, to cause to hear, to proclaim, to sound aloud"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 11:66).

"cursed" — arar — *"A verb generally denoting to inflict with a curse. There are at least five other Hebrew verbs with the same general meaning. This verb, in a more specific sense, means to bind (with a spell); to hem in with obstacles; to render powerless to resist"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 100); *"Bind and curse"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 76).

"sorrow" — issabon — *"Worrisomeness, i.e. labor or pain:--sorrow, toil"* (Strong's, CD); *"Worrisomeness, labor, toil, hard work; pain, sorrow, birth pangs"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning pain, toil"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 859); *"Pain, toil"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 781).

Note the pattern here. The woman was punished because she submitted to Satan. Now the man is punished because he submitted to the one who should have been submissive to him — "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife." Both the man and the woman had failed to listen to the voice of GOD. Instead, she listened to Satan, and he listened to Eve. When man gives attention to whoever speaks instead of GOD, only doom and gloom will come from such. Adam loved his wife — he put her first and obeyed her rather than GOD. Truly his foe was in his own family.

> "A man's foes shall be they of his own household.

He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:36-37).

The first consequence brought upon man because of his disobedience to GOD was that the ground was "cursed." As seen above in the word studies, there is the idea of being hemmed in with obstacles. In the beautiful garden, man simply had to be a caretaker of the garden. Now, instead of being a task which was pleasant, the task of getting their food would be filled with "sorrow." The word "sorrow" is associated in the lexicons with pain, hard work, and is the same word used in the above text to indicate the kind of birth pains a woman would have.

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

"thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;" (ASV)

There are those who believe that thorns and thistles did not exist on the earth before this time. This writer believes that the thorns and thistles already existed, but that they were found outside of the paradise garden. *Where was man to suffer the punishments described in these verses?* Outside the garden, once he was expelled from it. *What would make the garden so special if it was just like the land outside of its borders?*

Eating the herb of the field suggests to this writer that they would now have to search diligently for their food. Note that the idea of eating flesh is not condoned. Their food would not be as readily available to them as it seems to have been in the garden.

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

"in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (ASV)

"sweat of thy face" This is one of the signs of labor and toil, indicating intense efforts and not casual movement. In order to have food ("bread"), intense labor is now going to be required of man. This condition will exist until one's life ends. There are those who say that work was the punishment which man received for disobedience. Those who state this forget that GOD has always given man work to do. In the perfect garden, he was to "dress it and to keep it." This physical garden was the type of the eternal paradise (Heaven). *Does it not stand to reason that those souls which inhabit Heaven will have something to do?*

"The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:10).

As Crawford correctly states, *"honest labor is a great blessing, a positive antidote for worry, self-pity, temptation, vice and crime"* (p. 160).

Mankind came from the dust (dirt) of the ground, and it is to that dust that his body will return. Note (as one writer pointed out), man's body returns to the place from which it came — the ground, not the flesh and fat of the apes. It does not return to slime pits, from which some would have had him originate.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto GOD who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

"All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Proverbs 34:15).

As studied in chapter two, physical death is the spirit (soul) of man's leaving the physical body it inhabits.

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

"And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." (ASV)

Adam now gives his wife a name — Eve. Baker and Carpenter say this name means *"living, making alive." Why did he call her this?* "because she was the mother of all living" *Why is this statement given to man?* Because it shows that the entire human race came from one pair. There were not multiple families created at the beginning — only one pair. As shown earlier, all human beings come from one human source — Adam. Eve was made from his body and from them all human beings have since come. This truth is emphasized again in Acts 17:25-26.

"He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (emphasis mine, RK).

Human beings would produce after their "kind," just as would the plants, beasts, and everything else which grows.

It should be considered that it was initially through Eve that death came into the world. But when Adam named her, he named her by faith in the promise of GOD (Eve — *"living, making alive"*). It would be through a woman's seed

that the Savior, who brings life, would come into the world. Adam is now walking by faith — not by sight. It is not what he can see that is determining his footsteps, but what he cannot see. Remember, at this time they had no children — but they did have GOD's promise.

Clarke states that the Septuagint literally renders this verse as, *"And Adam called his wife's name Life, because she was the mother of all the living"* (p. 55).

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

> "And Jehovah GOD made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them." (ASV)

"coats" — kuttonet — *"A feminine noun indicating a coat, a garment, a tunic. It indicates a long undergarment with a collar cut out for one's head; the main common garment worn by men or women"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 532).

"clothed" — labas — *"A verb meaning to wear; to dress, to put on clothing"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 540).

The first thing one should notice is that the clothing made for Adam was the same as that made for his wife. The second thing which has been indicated in this context is the emphasis upon their being naked. Obviously, the clothes which GOD made were to cover this nakedness. The question which needs to be addressed is *How much of their bodies did GOD cover?* English Bibles do not give one much help in this matter. In modern English, "coat" describes a garment which basically covers the upper portion of the body. Thus, at the least, GOD covered the upper part of their bodies with a garment which could not reveal any part of the body. The Hebrew word here ("kuttonett"), as indicated above, shows an *"undergarment with a collar cut out for one's head; the main common garment worn by men or women."* In America. when one thinks of an undergarment, he thinks of a skimpy article which really hides hardly anything. But the garment GOD made to cover the nakedness of a man and a woman was of skins and went from the neck to the ankles. Men, please take note — GOD dressed them equally to hide their nakedness. Thus, there is no difference between them, and if it were OK for a man to go in public without a shirt, then it would be OK for a woman to do so. **It is not OK** for a woman to so do, therefore **it is not OK** for a man to so do — ACCORDING TO GOD'S STANDARDS. *"But Bob, that was way back in ancient times — things are different now."* Friend, *Did not Jesus go back to the beginning to emphasize GOD's law regarding marriage in "modern times?" What about going back to the beginning with regard to GOD's desire for modesty?*

"He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6).

After sin entered the garden, the innocent, nude state they had previously had was no longer acceptable. The One who made man determined that they should be clothed and how they should dress — which standard still exists today. Sin causes people to flaunt their bodies in various states of undress — godliness causes one to cover himself. In Mark 5, one finds a man who was possessed with a legion of unclean spirits (demons).

"And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid" (Mark 5:15).

Note the condition of the man when the demons were cast out. He was "clothed" and in his "right mind."

"But Bob, we cannot find clothes which cover our bodies." Putting GOD and His will first would then necessitate making clothes which accommodate GOD's will or searching until found which is suitable to GOD. Customs of the times do not determine how godly people act — the Bible determines that.

Another question which should be asked is *"From where did the skins come which were used to make their clothing?"* There can only be one answer to this — animals were sacrificed to cover their nakedness — the first blood sacrifice was made.

One should also consider how the priests of the Mosaic age were told to dress. Special "breeches" were made for them so that there would be no accidental uncovering of their body as they served which went under a garment which covered their bodies (Exodus 28:42-43).

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

Was this the time when GOD instructed them in the animal sacrifices man was to make to Him for their sins? At some point GOD had to tell them about these sacrifices and how to offer them, for in the next chapter one sees Cain and Abel offering sacrifices as if this were something which had always been done.

Gen. 3:22-23 "And the LORD GOD said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now,

lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD GOD sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

> "And Jehovah GOD said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever - therefore Jehovah GOD sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (ASV)

One of the first things noticed in these verses is that man had previously only known that which was good, i.e., that which was excellent. There was no evil and no sin before the fruit was eaten from the forbidden tree. There was also no knowledge of guilt. There was no knowledge of the wrath of GOD, for there was no need for it. Sadly, that time had past because of man's disobedience. Man had once been like the GODHEAD — a clean and perfect spirit. Now he was soiled with sin, such as cannot be with GOD.

> *"He had been created in God's very image, but now that image had been gravely marred and defaced by his experience of evil"* (Morris, p. 131).

"take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" Once man sinned through experimental knowledge, it became necessary for GOD to drive him from the garden. *Why?* Because there was a tree there which (as long as man partook of it), would allow him to live forever. Several writers have expressed the idea that GOD did not allow them to live forever out of mercy. Imagine, if you will, living forever in this sin-filled world. *How can anyone want to live forever in the world as it is now? Would it not be better to die in this world and live in a beautiful paradise forever?*

In order to keep man from living forever in this world, GOD drove him out of the garden. Now he would till the ground "in the sweat of thy face" (v. 19). How humbling it must have been to Adam to till the ground from which he was taken, remembering all the while why he was doing such.

Note the passages where the "tree of life" is mentioned in the Bible: (1) In the garden of Eden — Genesis 2:9; 3:22, 24; (2) In Heaven (Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14). (The phrase "tree of life" is also found in the book of Proverbs, but it has nothing to do with the tree mentioned in the above references.) The "tree of life" which can give eternal life is only found in the beautiful, perfect garden at the beginning of time and in the perfect abode of Heaven.

Gen. 3:24 "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

> "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (ASV)

"drove" — garas — *"To drive out from a possession; especially to expatriate or divorce:--cast up (out), divorced (woman), drive away (forth, out), expel, X surely put away, trouble, thrust out"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to cast out, drive out"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 216); *"Drive out, cast out"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 176).

GOD "drove" mankind from the beautiful garden, i.e., he was forcefully evicted from the garden. This reminds one of Jesus driving the thieves out of the Temple (Matthew 21:12-13). This seems reasonable from the standpoint that most would resist being evicted from such a wonderful place. This writer believes that on the day of judgment that no one who is consigned to Hell will voluntarily leave the presence of GOD.

Wherever this garden was, it seems obvious that Adam and Eve were expelled to the east of the garden. *What would keep man from attempting to go back to the garden?* GOD placed cherubim and a flaming sword to keep man from returning. It would seem obvious from this verse that the garden remained for some undisclosed purpose for a time (possibly even until the flood destroyed the earth that then was???). This writer wonders if it could be seen by them, reminding them of what they had lost and causing a desire to regain that position deep in their hearts. A longing, if you will, to return to close communion with GOD. It might be mentioned here that people sometimes think that there was a gate to the garden which was guarded by the cherubim and sword, but there is nothing in the text which indicates a gate of any kind.

What are the "cherubim" ("im" in Hebrew signals the plural)? Not much is known about these beings. They are heavenly beings which are identified as surrounding the throne of GOD. They are seen at each end of the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:18), and they appeared on the vale between the Holy Place and Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:31). They are portrayed as having wings in Exodus 37:9.

> "Over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (Hebrews 9:5).

What did they look like? No one knows as is indicated by the Hebrews writer.

Genesis — Chapter Four

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

> "And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah." (ASV)

The theme of this chapter could easily be ***"Sin is a cancer that progressively grows worse."***

"And Adam knew his wife" The word "knew" is used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. A euphemism is *"the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant"* (Webster, CD).

From this union came a son named Cain. The name "Cain" means *"gotten"* (Morris, p. 134), *"acquired"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 994). It may have come from the statement made by Eve upon his birth — "I have gotten a man from the LORD." This statement shows that Eve had regained her faith in GOD. GOD had promised she would have children (Genesis 3:15-16). Is it possible that Eve's statement considered the possibility that this might be the one who would bruise the head of Satan? If so, then it shows that she did not understand that the one who would bruise Satan's head would only have one human parent.

It should be remembered here that children are a gift, a heritage, a blessing from GOD.

> "Lo, children are a heritage of Jehovah; And the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm 127:3).

Later in Genesis, Esau asked Jacob, "Who are these with thee?" Jacob answered, "The children which GOD hath graciously given thy servant" (Genesis 33:5).

A question to consider here — Was this the first-born child of Eve? It is known from Genesis 5:4 that Adam and Eve had a number of sons and daughters. Since Eve was the "mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20), Cain's wife would have been one of his sisters or at least one of his nieces.

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

> "And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (ASV)

The revelation is next made of the birth of Cain's brother — Abel (*"vanity, wind"* — Baker/Carpenter, p. 254); *"vapor"* — (Morris, p. 135).

"For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

Why is the birth of daughters not mentioned until Genesis five? Because their births are not germane to the events which GOD wants one to know.

Abel's life was indeed like the wind which quickly comes and goes, and very little is said about him in this chapter. Yet, when the Spirit commanded the writer of Hebrews to make a list of the great men and women of faith, the list begins with Abel. In Matthew 23:35, Jesus called Abel righteous, and in Luke 11:50-51, Jesus called him a prophet (prophets were teachers). His short life indeed teaches one that the righteous will suffer at the hands of the unrighteous. It also shows that one may maintain these onslaughts even if it costs him his life. Further, note that if the righteous one's life is required at the hands of the unrighteous, he gains the honor that only GOD can bestow on him — the crown of life.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

The occupations of these two boys is given, and one sees the first farmer (Cain) and the first shepherd (Abel). The produce from Cain's garden would provide food, while the sheep would provide clothing and the primary sacrifice commanded by GOD. The focus is not upon their occupations (both were honorable), but rather their sacrifices (with the intention of showing the difference between obedience and disobedience to GOD's commands).

There is one thing about their occupations which should be noticed. Evolutionists portray the first human beings as savages who ate whatever they could find — primarily flesh. They maintain that it took a long time for man to pursue the practice of agriculture. The first man and woman kept the garden, maintained it. Their first son was primarily an agriculturist. Again one sees the clear contradiction between GOD's word and atheistic evolution. He also sees that this contradiction (and many others found) throws ice-water on the philosophical notion of theistic-evolution's being a possibility.

Gen. 4:3-4 "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:"

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering:" (ASV)

"in process of time" This points to a particular time and does not mean that there were no sacrifices being made before the present incident. The point being made is that there came a time when there was rebellion to GOD's prescribed acts of worship. Man often follows the way of Cain in these matters, thinking that he can add to GOD's way of worship or take away from it. In essence, Cain spoke evil of GOD's way of doing things by basically saying it did not matter what GOD said.

> "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 1:11).

Cain's way is the way of rebellion.

Some might ask, How do you know GOD had given instructions about worship, and (in this case more specifically) what they were to offer in sacrifice? First, GOD is a just GOD. It would be unjust for Him to have allowed them to bring sacrifices to Him and then condemn one for bringing the wrong sacrifice if He had not first told them what to bring. Second, Hebrews 11:4 says that Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. The Bible clearly states that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD" (Romans 10:17). If there is no word from GOD on a given subject, there can be no action of faith!

What made the offering of Cain unacceptable to GOD? Was it because he offered him inferior produce of the field? Was the produce half spoiled? This writer believes that what Cain brought was probably the best of the "fruit of the ground." Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable because (1) It was not what GOD prescribed. (2) It was not a blood sacrifice. A blood sacrifice was a reminder that blood was needed to remove sins. Further, these sacrifices were teaching and preparing them for the ultimate blood sacrifice for sins — the death of Christ on the cross. What did Abel offer? An innocent lamb — a lamb which had never sinned. What sacrifice was made on the cross? The Lamb of GOD which had never sinned. In both cases, the innocent was offered for the guilty.

"And the LORD had respect unto Abel and his offering" The word "respect" comes from the Hebrew word saah. Baker/Carpenter say, *"It means to look on something with approval, to accept it"* (p. 1180). Man tends to think that if he offers something to GOD with "sincerity," that such an offering will be acceptable to GOD no matter what he offers. Such an offering may be made in sincerity, but it has not been offered with the right attitude or in truth.

> *"That this regarding with favor directs itself first to the person, then to the offering; so is the case of both the brothers. This fact very significantly shows that the determining factor in worship is the attitude of the individual"* (Leupold, p. 196).

The above quote from Leupold expresses how many view

the matter of sacrifice and worship. But there is a problem with their line of reasoning. If one has the right attitude, will he not do things the way GOD says to do them? Further, the word "sincere" comes from two Latin words: "sin," (meaning "without") and "cere," (meaning "wax") — sincere — without wax. The word came about because those who carved statues from marble might find a crack as they sculpted the statue. Thus, the statue was practically worthless. Some dishonest sculptors would take marble dust, mix it with wax, fill in the crack and sell the statue as if there were no flaw in it. Later, as the piece sat in the courtyard, the sun would shine on it, the wax would melt and the flaw would be revealed. Honest sculptors began to shout to the crowds "sincere" – without wax – to let their prospective customers know there was no flaw in what they sold. If one is truly sincere, he does not offer something to GOD different from what He has commanded. There will be no flaw in his offering.

Keil and Delitzsch think that the problem with Cain's offering was not that he offered fruit of the ground, but that the quality of what he offered was inferior — not the best of what he grew. They state that *"each necessarily took his gift from the produce of his own occupation"* (p. 110). If one follows their line of thinking, then it would have been acceptable to GOD for a carpenter to bring the best cabinet he had made, or the song writer to bring the best piece of sheet music he had ever written. Such reasoning is easily seen to be in error. GOD demanded an animal, and Cain could have traded his fruit of the ground to Abel for one or raised his own. When the people came to the Temple from other lands, they brought the money earned from their occupations to purchase the needed sacrifice in order to be pleasing to GOD.

> *"GOD will respect a man and his offering only when one makes it a point to do exactly that which will meet with divine approval. The sacrifice must be right, but the heart must be right also"* (Coats, p. 68).

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

> "but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." (ASV)

"respect" — sata — *"A verb meaning to look with favor or in dismay. It means to look on something with approval, to accept it; or to look on some burdensome thing or situation in trepidation, dismay"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1180); *"Gaze (steadily, with interest...regard (with favor)...turn gaze away"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 1043).

"wrath" — harah — *"This root means to burn, be kindled, glow with anger, be incensed, grow indignant; to be zealous, act zealously. Unlike some of its synonyms, chaMraMh points to the fire or heat of the anger just after it has been ignited. It can refer to the anger of either men or God. It has the sense of fretting"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to burn, to be kindled, to glow, to grow warm. Figuratively it means to get angry or to become vexed"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 376); *"Burn, be kindled, of anger"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 354).

"countenance" — paneh — *"A face, surface"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning a face. Although the literal meaning of face is possible, most of the time this word occurs in a figurative, idiomatic phrase"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 906).

The sacrifice which Cain offered did not please GOD, because it was not what GOD had commanded. GOD showed only displeasure for it. There is a clear message in verses four and five which man must recognize. Just because one offers a sacrifice to GOD does not mean that GOD accepts it. He may and does disregard any sacrifice which is not according to His commands and which is not offered with the right attitude. Further, an act of worship may be done exactly according to the prescribed manner, but if the attitude of offering it is not correct, it will be rejected. The heart must be right. Jesus taught the same thing.

> "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

"Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" The word "angry" (wroth) here seems to mean a growing anger which has become great. An image of this can be seen in a match, which starts as a very small flame, one that is easily extinguishable. But when left alone, it grows into a large forest fire which is difficult to put out. As will be noticed, he took his anger out on Abel because of GOD's rejection of his **will offering**. But with whom should Cain have been angry? Should not his anger have been taken out upon himself? Abel was innocent of any wrong doing. When one sins, he should be angry with himself for disobeying GOD. He tried to blame someone else for his sin instead of the right source of it — his own desires. Cain's countenance fell (his face fell). Why? He was being

rebuked by GOD, and he knew he was guilty. When such rebuke comes, a most important question must be asked. "Will I repent or continue in disobedience?"

Gen. 4:6-7 "And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

> "And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it." (ASV)

"lieth" — rabas — *"A primitive root; to crouch (on all four legs folded, like a recumbent animal); by implication, to recline, repose, brood, lurk, imbed:--crouch (down), fall down, make a fold, lay, (cause to, make to) lie (down), make to rest, sit"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to lie down, to rest; to lay something down. It is used figuratively of sin lying, crouching at the door"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1032); *"Stretch oneself out, lie down, lie stretched out"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 918).

From verse five, it was noticed that Cain was very angry because of the rejection of his offering. Did GOD leave him to stew in his anger? GOD tried to help Cain overcome his anger. GOD was trying to show mercy to Cain, a mercy which would be rejected by him. GOD was giving Cain an opportunity to repent. GOD has made mercy possible for all men in every age, but like Cain, most of the time it is rejected.

What is the solution to Cain's anger — to his fallen countenance? To get rid of these things, he must do well, i.e., he must do the will of GOD. Like all men, Cain had a choice, and GOD showed him what the result would be if he did not do right. Just here the NKJV should be noted, because it gives a better sense of the meaning than does the KJV. "And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." If Cain chose not to repent, does not to do right, sin is waiting at the door of his heart to consume him. It is the same for all men.

> "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Notice that sin is personified as if it were alive, just like the Devil is personified like a "roaring lion," ready to pounce on its victim. If one opens the door of his heart to the enemy (sin/Satan), be assured that the enemy is ready to enter and overcome him. He is waiting for his opportunity to so do. Further, note that GOD said Cain could rule over sin.

In other words, Cain did not have to give in to his evil thoughts; he could be victorious over sin; and so can we.

> "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

How does one resist evil, the evil one?

> "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:9).

One resists Satan by following the directions of GOD and doing His will. Cain was told to stop following his own thinking and do what GOD told him to do.

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

> "And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (ASV)

Apparently the conversation between Abel and his brother became heated. Why would such an argument take place? Cain was angry because his sacrifice was not acceptable. On the other hand, Abel's sacrifice had been accepted. Could this be the rearing of jealousy? One sees a righteous man engaged in conversation with an evil man. A righteous man does not want to see anyone in the condition of being unacceptable to GOD. This writer would assume that they discussed the situation and that Abel tried to get his brother to repent — just as GOD had tried to gain the same result. It seems obvious that Cain did not like this, just as evil men have always despised being encouraged to turn from sin to righteousness.

Why did Cain murder his brother? Let one notice 1 John 3:11-13, where a Biblical answer is given.

> "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? **Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.** Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (Emphasis mine, RK).

First, one sees that Satan (wicked one) had gained control of Cain. Second, Cain's works were evil. Third, what set Cain off was the comparison of good with evil. Another thing which should be noted here is that the world, i.e., the worldly, those who belong to Satan, will hate the godly one.

One has now viewed the first murder — brother murdering brother. How sad and heart-breaking this must have been for both Adam and Eve. How they must have wished that they had never violated GOD's law.

It should be noted that a number of writers believe that

Cain planned this murder and therefore invited Abel to go out into the field with him. Once they were alone, he intended to murder Abel. This writer sees this as a real possibility but is unwilling to affirm it as the reality.

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

> "And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" (ASV)

Again one sees a question which is designed to draw out a confession. With Adam and Eve, it did draw them into admitting their sin. But Cain is different. Instead of humbly admitting his sin, he arrogantly denied that he had done anything wrong. As seen in the next verse, GOD did not ask this question for information. An honest heart would have been pricked by GOD's question, as were the honest Jews on Pentecost.

"Am I my brother's keeper" In the absolute sense, the answer would be no. One cannot guarantee the safety of another when he is not in his presence. But there is another sense which must be considered, and which is the case here.

> *"All men are obligated to one another; and no man has the right to seek his own selfish ends without regard to what the effect may be upon others"* (Coffman, p. 79).

One must treat others as he would have others treat him.

> "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

There is a true sense in which each one must seek the best interests of all those around him. The object is to save lives — both physically and spiritually — not destroy them.

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

> "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." (ASV)

> *"Innocent blood has no voice, it may be, that is discernable by human ears, but it has one that reaches God, as the cry of a wicked deed demanding vengeance"* (Keil/Delitzsch, p. 113).

"What hast thou done? The idea seems to be What horrible thing have you done? This indicates the way GOD views the shedding of innocent blood. The shedding of an innocent man's blood may go unnoticed by man, but GOD is always aware of it and will avenge that blood. Life is in

the blood.

> "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

When a man murders another, he can be assured that GOD takes notice of it. This is true whether the blood is shed by man or beast.

> "Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man" (Genesis 9:5).

> "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand" (Ezekiel 33:6).

When considering the first martyr (Abel) and the greatest martyr (Christ), one sees a difference in their blood. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, whereas Christ's blood calls for mercy and forgiveness.

> "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24).

Gen. 4:11-12 "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

> "And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth." (ASV)

"curse" — arar — *"A verb generally denoting to inflict with a curse. There are at least five other Hebrew verbs with the same general meaning. This verb, in a more specific sense, means to bind (with a spell); to hem in with obstacles; to render powerless to resist"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 100).

"fugitive" — nua — *"A verb meaning to shake, to stagger, to wander. It refers to a displaced person, a wanderer, a vagrant"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 717); *"Quiver, wave, waver, tremble...cause to wander"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 631).

"vagabond" — nud — *"A primitive root; to nod, i.e. waver; figuratively, to wander, flee, disappear; also (from shaking the head in sympathy), to console, deplore, or (from tossing*

the head in scorn) taunt:--bemoan, flee, get, mourn, make to move, take pity, remove, shake, skip for joy, be sorry, vagabond, way, wandering" (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to flee, to wander, to mourn. It has the sense of aimless motion or actions. It refers to a person moving about aimlessly without a home"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 715); *"Shake, move to and fro, be disturbed, agitate"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, 626).

The curse means that the earth will not produce its bounty for this farmer — Cain. If the ground of a farmer will not produce the food he needs to sustain his family, he has two options. (1) Remain there, and his family will suffer and maybe starve. (2) He can move to another plot of land with the hope that it will produce crops. If the places he settles continually do not produce, then he will have to wander from place to place. No matter where Cain goes, the ground will not produce good crops.

When one looks at the terms GOD uses to describe what Cain will be, he sees a very unsettled person. "Fugitive" refers to shaking, trembling, quivering, which seem to indicate a fear of others or some bad event to come. A "vagabond" carries the sense of aimless wandering — a person without a home.

> "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1).

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

> "And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear." (ASV)

"punishment" — awon — *"(moral) evil:--fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin"* (Strong's, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning iniquity, evil, guilt, punishment. This is one of the four main words indicating sin in the Old Testament. This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrong doing"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 814); *"A depraved action, perversity, perverseness, sin, guilt, a crime, a fault, iniquity, mischief; punishment, the penalty of sin; suffering, misery"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"My punishment is greater than I can bear." This is an admission of guilt, an admission of sin. The definitions of the Hebrew word for "punishment" should be carefully noted. The Hebrew word does not simply indicate punishment but, as indicated by Baker and Carpenter, is one of the four main words used in the Old Testament to indicate sin and includes its punishment. It would seem to this writer that the last phrase of this verse could be translated "My sin and punishment are greater than I can

endure." The margin of this writer's Bible reads, *"Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven."* Another way of rendering this may be "My punishment for sin is greater than I can bear."

Man's sins, no matter what they may be or how small he may think them to be, are always greater than he can bear. There is only One who can bear man's sins.

> "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).
>
> "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).
>
> "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

If man will simply learn to turn to Him in true repentance, forgiveness will follow. Further, the One who CAN bear man's sins invites him to accept His offer.

> "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

In Cain's words to GOD, one sees admission of guilt but no contriteness of heart — no repentance — no request for forgiveness. Cain is expressing the sorrow of the world, sorrow for getting caught and whining over the punishment inflicted upon him for his transgressions. If you are not willing to pay the price, do not commit the crime. Cain is indulging in self-pity – *"Poor me — look at what is happening to me."* In a sense, he is echoing the implication that Satan made to Eve in the garden that GOD is too harsh. He dwells on the punishment — not the sin.

Gen. 4:14 "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

> "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me." (ASV)

Cain's punishment was not as severe as he imagined it.

He could have received the death sentence, as it was imposed after the flood on those who murdered another.

> "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made he man" (Genesis 9:6).

Instead, Cain was given time in the hope that he would repent. It should be noted that the death penalty did not originate with man. GOD is the author of the death penalty and indeed asserts that it should be enacted in murder cases..

Of what is Cain afraid? That someone will murder him.

> *"The psychology of the reaction is characteristic. Murderers fear that they in turn will be slain by others. The coward Cain did not hesitate to slay Abel, but he is dreadfully afraid lest another slay him"* (Leupold, p. 210).

Of whom was Cain afraid? The anti-Bible critics say this proves that there must have been other families on the earth at the same time as Adam's family. They claim that there could not have been only four people on the earth at this time — Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel. These critics are anti-GOD from this standpoint: GOD said there were only the original pair. Further, Adam was not contradicted by GOD when he named Eve the mother of all living. Third, in chapter five, one is told that Adam begat sons and daughters. Fourth, Cain had a wife. How many children did Adam and Eve have at the time of this murder? No one knows nor can anyone know how many they had.

It has been suggested by some that Cain was afraid of the goel, i.e., the avenger of blood. Was the avenger of blood instituted by this time? If so, then only a near-kinsman could have been the avenger of blood, which would also eliminated a different family unit.

Another question which is often asked in this section is Where did Cain get his wife? This is often another attempt by the anti-GOD people to claim that there must have been other families on the earth at this time. They say it would have been incest for Cain to marry a member of his own family. This argument is made with the assumption that the same laws which exist in the United States today regarding incest were in effect at the time of the creation. Incest was not made illegal until the Law of Moses was given (see Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:11,12,17,19-21; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20-23; Ezekiel 22:11; 1 Chronicles 5:1). Before the Law of Moses was instituted, there was no such law against incest. So where did Cain get his wife? Since the Bible is always true, and since Eve was the mother of all living, then Cain's wife was one of his near kinswomen, probably a sister — **AND THERE WAS NO SIN ATTACHED!**

Gen. 4:15 "And the LORD said unto him, Therefore

whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

> "And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him." (ASV)

Cain stated that he was afraid that other men would murder him. GOD assured him that he would not be murdered, because the punishment which would be inflicted upon the one who killed him would be great. The punishment for one who killed Cain would be sevenfold. The term "sevenfold" is a term which was used by the Hebrews to represent a complete number. Here it would refer to a perfect or complete punishment.

There are several questions which may be asked here. Why did GOD not slay Cain when he murdered his brother? This question cannot be answered absolutely, though there are several speculations about it. Why did not GOD allow anyone else to slay Cain? This author believes, at least in part, that the answer has to do with "vengeance." The Bible is clear that vengeance does not belong to man but rather to GOD.

> "For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people" (Hebrews 10:30).

> "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

It is GOD Who has the right to determine the boundaries of punishment for any man.

What "mark" (sign) did GOD place on Cain so that he could be identified by all? There have been all kinds of speculations about what this sign may have been. The word "mark" comes from a Hebrew word which signifies a sign, mark or token. The ASV shows that GOD *"appointed a sign for Cain,"* which is quite different from putting a mark on him. The point is simply that GOD made some kind of designation which would identify Cain to all people and warn them about him. How this was done, and what it was, does not matter.

Gen. 4:16-17 "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch."

> "And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife;

and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." (ASV)

One should take a moment to consider the population of the earth.

> *"Although we have no exact figures, it is possible to make a reasonable guess as to how rapidly the total human population developed. Since, according to the record in Genesis 5, each named patriarch lived many hundreds of years and 'begat sons and daughters,' it is reasonable and very conservative to assume that each family had, on the average, at least six children — three sons and three daughters, It is further assumed that, on the average, these children grew to maturity, married, and began to have children of their own by the time their parents were eighty years old, and that the parents lived through an average of five such 'generations,' for four hundred years, then it can be easily calculated that the earth had acquired within its first eight hundred years (presumably approximately the lifetime of Cain, as a minimum) a population of at least one hundred and twenty thousand. It is probably that the figure was much more than this, since people lived to greater ages than assumed and probably had many more children than assumed...Long before Cain died, there was a large population in the earth. By the time of the Deluge, 1,656 years after Creation by the Usher chronology, even using the above conservative assumptions, the world population would have been at least seven billion people"* (Morris, p. 143).

In May of 2012, the world population counter went over seven billion again.

There would appear to be a specific place where GOD revealed Himself to mankind. This writer does not profess to know exactly where that place was except that it must have been outside of the original garden. This writer believes it to be a place where a particular altar was. Wherever this place was, Cain moved away from this area. Where did he go? The land of Nod. The word "Nod" does not seem to mean a specific location, as for instance one might think of England or some other country. Leupold says the word "Nod" means *"the land of wandering or straying"* (p. 213). But note what will happen; he moved his family away from GOD and the result was not a better family but rather decadence developing on a large scale. When man separates himself from GOD you never end up with a better society but a corrupt one. As America moves toward a secular society the fruits of such a society are

quickly seen. Mass murders, rape, theft, homosexual and lesbian marriages, abortion on demand, and on and on the list grows.

Cain's family was begun in his wandering. A son is born — Enoch. Much is made of Cain's building a city, and yet he was told that he would be a wanderer. Again, part of this is based on customs that "modern" man has with regard to large populations living in permanent buildings. Let it be remembered that cities may also be tent cities, which are highly moveable. In Vietnam, this writer remembers a city of tents which housed over ten-thousand soldiers. It could be completely moved in less than twelve hours.

Gen. 4:18 "And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech."

> "And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methushael; and Methushael begat Lamech." (ASV)

Six generations of Cain's family are given in this passage. It should be noted that, unlike the family of Seth, no years are given in Cain's family which would mark time. The names are simply listed. There is so much disagreement on what their names may mean that this writer chooses not to attempt to sort them out. Regarding the similarity of names in the two lists (Cain and Seth), there can be little doubt that the lists are quite different. But even where there are some repetitions, it is easily explained by people naming their children after a famous relative, famous person, after themselves, or just because they like a name.

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

> "And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah." (ASV)

GOD had designed one man and one woman for each other — this was GOD's original plan for marriage. If GOD had wanted one to have more than one living mate, he would have made two wives for Adam or two husbands for Eve. Lamech's is the first recorded instance of man's breaking away from GOD's marriage plan. This is the first recorded instance of polygamy/bigamy (henceforth referred to simply as bigamy). Bigamy is *"the act of entering into a marriage with one person while still legally married to another"* (Webster, CD). It should be asked, Whose jurisdiction makes it legal or illegal? **Only GOD's jurisdiction makes something He has spoken about legal or illegal. GOD's law easily trumps all civil laws!**

A piece of paper issued by a human court is useless when it contradicts GOD's law. In America, one seldom sees open bigamy (though it does exist), i.e., either one man or one woman living with multiple "husbands" or "wives." But practical bigamy is practiced in America through the system of marriage-divorce-remarriage-divorce-remarriage, et cetera, without Biblical cause.

> "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder...And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:5-6, 9).

"Practical bigamy" exists when one puts away his wife or her husband without Biblical cause, i.e., without GOD's sanctioning that divorce — and then marries another.

Gen. 4:20-21 "And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."

> "And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe." (ASV)

Two sons of Lamech and Adah are named, probably because of their accomplishments. The first son mentioned is Jabal, who is credited with inventing the tent. The term "father of" tends to indicate the source of something, the inventor. This would have allowed them to move easily from one place to another with a domicile as they wandered from place to place to find food for their flocks. He was also the "father of" husbandry. The term "cattle" was not used to signify only cows. Instead, the word signifies a variety of domesticated animals which were herded.

The second son mentioned of Lamech and Adah was Jubal. He is said to be the "father of" wind and stringed instruments. From this time on, musical instruments seem to have grown in use.

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

> "And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah." (ASV)

"Instructor" — latas — *"A primitive root; properly, to*

hammer out (an edge), i.e. to sharpen:--instructor, sharp(-en), whet" (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to sharpen, to hammer, to instruct...It is used in its active participial form to indicate a smith or forger of metal tools or instruments"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 550); *"Hammer, sharpen, whet"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 538).

Lamech and Zillah have a son named Tubal-cain who was skilled in making things from metal — a metallurgist. The text seems to indicate that he was skilled in teaching others how to work in brass and iron. With every invention comes the potential that that thing will be used for good or evil. The ability to refine and mold metals could be used to produce hoes, shovels and other useful products. Metal could also be used for weapons of destruction. (Side note: Weapons are neither good nor bad in and of themselves. It is what is done with them by the person wielding them which becomes good or bad. A shovel used by a mad-man can be just as destructive as a sword.) Metals would also be used to craft idols.

Tubal-cain's sister is mentioned by name here — Naamah. It is not known why she is mentioned, for she is not mentioned again in the Bible, and no other reference is made to her. Some have suggested that her name means "pleasant," and that may indicate that Cain's side of Adam's family may have sought the sensual beauty instead of inner beauty. This is pure speculation.

Gen. 4:23-24 "And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."

> "And Lamech said unto his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: For I have slain a man for wounding me, And a young man for bruising me: If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." (ASV)

The words of Lamech in these two verses are considered by many to be the first poem ever recorded.

"I have slain a man to my wounding" The wording of this phrase in the KJV is awkward. It is much easier to get the sense of it in the ASV or NKJV. The alternate reading in the margin of this writer's Bible says, *"I would slay a man in my wound."* Was the young man an aggressor whom Lamech slew in self defense? This seems to be the more likely case of what is being said here. One might also consider the following questions: *Did Lamech, for whatever reason or excuse, attack and kill this man? Did Lamech slay the young man by accident or premeditation?*

The words of verse twenty-four seem to speak of vengeance. GOD had decreed that He would bring

vengeance upon anyone who took it upon himself to kill Cain. If indeed this verse deals with vengeance, then it would appear that Lamech is taking upon himself the right to take vengeance on anyone who harms him. Note the apparent inflated view he had of himself. If Cain was worth seven times the vengeance, he thought he was worth "seventy and seven fold." Further, this would seem to show an attitude that cannot wait to strike back against any perceived wrong done to him — the proverbial chip-on-the-shoulder. Notice how the Lord viewed human beings and vengeance.

> "Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22, see context of Jesus' statement).

Jesus taught that, if someone had actually sinned against one, if he asked for forgiveness, then it was to be granted as many times as it was asked. He did not teach that one should seek vengeance against those who sinned against him.

Gen. 4:25-26 "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For GOD, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD."

> "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth. For, said she, GOD hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel; for Cain slew him. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enosh. Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah." (ASV)

The scene now shifts from Cain's family to Abel's replacement — Seth. By Eve's declaration, GOD has given her a replacement for Abel. Consider that Abel was righteous, and Seth will prove himself to be righteous as well. It will be through Seth that the lineage will flow down through time, eventually resulting in the birth of GOD's Son. Does this verse mean that, between the births of Abel and Seth, Adam and Eve did not have any other sons? It should be remembered here that the point is a son of Adam's which would be in the lineage of the Anointed One. The purpose of this text is not to state how many children they had. Note that not one daughter is named of Adam and Eve's, but it is known from the context that they had a number of them.

One should observe the contrast between the two lineages. Note the accomplishments listed for Cain's descendants. They all deal with human accomplishments

which deal with physical things — they walked by sight. But when one gets to the lineage of Seth — the Messiah's lineage — the thing said is "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."

Marginal reading: *"to call themselves by the name of the Lord"* (KJV).

The contrast seems to be between physical accomplishments by worldly men and spiritual accomplishments by spiritual men.

> "It came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of GOD saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:1-2).

Pointing out that men began to call themselves by GOD's name seems to indicate the beginning of public, or group worship.

The name of Seth's son through whom the lineage of Jesus would come is given — Enosh (Heb.). This is different from Enoch of verse seventeen. This also leads appropriately into the next chapter, where the lineage of Messiah is more fully revealed.

Genesis Chapter Five

Gen. 5:1-2 "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that GOD created man, in the likeness of GOD made He him; Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created."

> "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that GOD created man, in the likeness of GOD made He him; male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." (ASV)

"generations" — toledot — *"Descent, i.e. family; (figuratively) history:--birth, generations"* (Strong's, CD); *"A feminie noun meaning a generation. This key Hebrew word carries with it the notion of everything entailed in a person's life and that of his or her progeny. In the plural, it is used to denote the chronological procession of history as human's shape it. It refers to the successive generations in one family; or a broader division by lineage"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1217); *"It means descent, family, race, history, birth, generation, origin, lineage, family register, record of the family, pedigree, genealogy. It refers to what is produced or brought into being by someone, and sometimes the results. Usually, it does not include the birth of the individual who started the line of descendants. Therefore, Gen. 2:4 does not indicate the process of how heaven and earth came into existence, but the events which followed their establishment. In other words, it is not a summary of the events which preceded Gen. 2:4"* (Zodhiates, CD).

The word "book" is interesting, because this is the first time the word is found in the Old Testament. As such, it deals with the generations of the first Adam. In the New Testament, the first use of the word "book" (Matthew 1:1) deals with the generations of the second Adam — Jesus, the Son of GOD. *Is it possible that a book of these generations was handed down through time and was incorporated by Moses here?* Evolutionist like to claim that our ancient ancestors were basically ignorant people who could not read or write. There is no evidence that they are right, but there is every evidence that the first human beings were very intelligent and therefore could read and write. The reason evolutionists want to portray early human beings as unintelligent is for the purpose of portraying them as dumb animals from they say human beings came. If they appeared on the scene as intelligent beings, then it destroys their evolutionary theories.

The next thing noticed is the word "generations," which signifies the unfolding of the descendants of Adam. But

more than that, it is not all the descendants of Adam, but those which specifically are the lineage through which the Christ would come.

One should remember the word "created" (which comes from the word bara), which again emphasizes how Adam came into being. Adam was brought into existence and not manipulated into being, or evolved into being. One should remind himself that this word is only used of GOD, therefore signifying something that only GOD could do. Note that the word is used three times in the first two verses of this chapter, emphasizing the work of GOD and GOD alone.

The term "Adam" is used both as a personal name and a generic name. It is used to signify the name of the first male in existence, but it is also used simply to mean "man" or "mankind." By naming human beings, GOD is declaring His dominion over them, just as with Adam's naming the animals and Eve.

Why do the first two verses here "recall the God-likeness, the two sexes, God's blessing and the naming of the race" (Leupold, Vol. 1, p. 231)? *Why is the creative act recalled?* It can only be to remind man of how Adam's generations began, to remind one of Genesis chapter one. GOD wants man to remember from whence he came and where he can go. Man began existence in the image of GOD; he was sinless. He lived in the beautiful garden with GOD's presence; he can through faithful obedience once again live in His presence and have GOD's image.

Coffman makes a point which this writer believes should be remembered about this chapter.

> *"The great purpose of the chapter was not to give the age either of the earth or the human race when the flood came, but to trace the line of people who continued to honor God in those generations leading up to the Deluge"* (p. 91).

While these genealogies may not help one to have an exact knowledge of how old the world is, it can help him have a close knowledge of that time frame. The number which is obtained is far different from the millions and billions of years at which the anti-GOD evolutionists arrive. In observing this genealogy it should be observed that it follows a pattern. (1) The name of the father is given. (2) The name of a specific son is given. (3) The age of the father at his sons birth is given. (4) The age of the father is given at his death.

Gen. 5:3-5 "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were

nine hundred and thirty years: and he died."

> "And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: and the days of Adam after he begat Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." (ASV)

Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born, and he lived a total of nine hundred and thirty years. One often assumes that because of the concise nature of the Bible that Adam and Eve began having children immediately after leaving Eden. Further, it is assumed that Seth was born soon after Cain murdered Abel. Truth is, they might have had children shortly after leaving Eden or they may not have. Further, it is generally assumed that Cain was the firstborn of Adam and Eve. Fact is, these are recorded because of the importance of the events surrounding them and their actions. Did Cain faithfully offer the required offering for years and then decide he would substitute for GOD's requirements? Consider Adam's age when Seth was born when thinking about these matters.

This passage also states that Adam bore a son (Seth) in his own image. What exactly does this mean? In chapter one, GOD said, "let Us make man in Our image." There it speaks of spiritual image, since GOD is a Spirit (John 4:24). Was Adam speaking of the physical or spiritual image here? This writer would like to believe that he was speaking of the spiritual image, which would show Adam was again in close commune with GOD.

Gen. 5:6-8 "And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died."

> "And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begat Enosh: and Seth lived after he begat Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died." (ASV)

Seth was one hundred and five years old when Enos was born, and he lived a total of nine hundred and twelve years.

Gen. 6:9-11 "And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died."

> "And Enosh lived ninety years, and begat Kenan. and Enosh lived after he begat Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and

begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years: and he died." (ASV)

Enos was ninety years old when Cainan was born, and he lived a total of nine hundred and five years.

Gen. 5:12-14 "And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel: And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died."

"And Kenan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalalel: and Kenan lived after he begat Mahalalel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died" (ASV)

Cainan was seventy years old when Mahalaleel was born, and he lived a total of nine hundred and ten years.

Gen. 5:15-17 "And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died."

"And Mahalalel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: And Mahalalel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died" (ASV)

Gen. 5:18-20 "And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died."

"And Jared lived a hundred sixty and two years, and begat Enoch: and Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died." (ASV)

Gen. 5:21-24 "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with GOD after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with GOD: and he was not; for GOD took him."

"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with GOD after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with GOD: and he was not; for GOD took him." (ASV)

Enoch was sixty-five years old when Methuselah was

born, and he lived a total of three hundred and sixty-five years.

Here the genealogy, the toledoth, is different because more details are given than were given for those who went before Enoch. The first difference noted is that all who went before Enoch are said to have died. That statement is not made of Enoch, because he did not die. There is only one other man in history who did not die, because GOD took him in a whirlwind — Elijah (2 Kings 2:1-12).

Notice that in the present genealogy, Enoch is listed as the seventh patriarch. There are those who say there are gaps in this genealogical record. But notice Jude 14, where the Holy Spirit confirms the authenticity of this record.

> "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

One might also notice in Jude that Enoch made a prophecy about the Lord's coming in judgment.

The next thing noticed about Enoch is that he "walked with GOD." This phrase is only said of two people in all of the Bible. One might think that because Elijah was taken by GOD without dying, that he would have been the other — but he is not. The other person about whom the Bible says this is Noah (Genesis 6:9). *What does it mean to walk with GOD?* It means to walk (direct one's life) in a way which pleases GOD and that can only be done when one walks as GOD has directed.

> "Can two walk together, except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3)?

> "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because GOD had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased GOD" (Hebrews 11:5).

Consider also that to walk with GOD, he must have been one who actively tried to get others to obey GOD — not a passive walk. This writer's studied conclusion is based upon what is said of the only other person who is said to have "walked with GOD."

> "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5).

Noah was a preacher of righteousness, i.e., that which is right in GOD's sight. He faithfully proclaimed GOD's word. *Can one envision Enoch's not doing the same?* Further, consider that both Enoch and Noah prove that it is possible to live a life which pleases GOD. In Genesis 6:9, Noah was said to be "perfect," which comes from the Hebrew word tamim, which means *"faultless, upright in one's conduct,*

blameless" (Zodhiates, CD).

Gen. 5::25-27 "And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died."

> "And Methuselah lived a hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: and Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died." (ASV)

Methuselah was one hundred and eighty-seven years old when Lamech was born, and he lived a total of nine hundred and sixty-nine years.

Methulsaleh is the oldest recorded person who has ever lived on earth. One of the interesting things about the account here of Methusaleh is with regard to those who claim that the long years of the patriarchs were really months instead of years. If their assertion were correct, then Methusaleh would have lived a total of eighty years and nine months. Their attempts fail to shorten the lives of the patriarchs, and this is seen in the fact that Enoch had a son at age sixty-five, which would have made Enoch five years and five months old when his son Methusaleh was born. Their argument shows the lengths to which some will go in order to deny what the Bible says.

Another interesting thing to notice about Methusaleh is that he was three hundred and sixty-nine years old when Noah was born (187 when he had Lamech, and Lamech was 182 when Noah was born). Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came. Since Methusaleh lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years and died, this means that Methusaleh died in the year the flood came. This raises two questions: (1) *Did Methusaleh die in the same year of the flood but before the flood?* (2) *Did he die in the flood with the wicked who would not obey GOD and enter the ark of safety?* The Bible does not give the answer to these questions, only that he died in the year of the flood.

Gen. 5:28-31 "And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died."

> "And Lamech lived a hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall

comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, which cometh because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died." (ASV)

Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two years old when Noah was born, and he lived a total of seven hundred and seventy-seven years.

Lamech named his son "Noah" and states why he named him this. *What comfort did Lamech expect from this son? Was he looking for help in tilling the soil? Did he believe it would be through this son that there would be relief from the curse placed on the ground by GOD?* There is much controversy over the meaning of Noah's name, and the meaning behind Lamech's naming him is usually determined by the meaning assigned to his name. This writer chooses not to get involved in those speculations.

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

"And Noah was five hundred years old: And Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth." (ASV)

This verse basically sets out the main character of the next five chapters. One is told that Noah was five hundred years old and that he had three sons. Almost none of the commentators believe that these sons were triplets. Most do believe they are listed in chronological order of birth. The question this writer has is *Why could they not be triplets?*

Point to consider: The Bible says Enoch was the seventh (Jude 14) and Noah was the eighth (2 Peter 2:5). Why were Methuselah and Lamech skipped in this order? Does it indicate they were evil?

Genesis Chapter Six

Gen. 6:1-2 "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of GOD saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

> "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of GOD saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose." (ASV)

Those who would transform the Bible into fairy tales (liberals) love to point to this passage as their so-called proof. If they can transform the book of Genesis into nothing more than tall tales, myths and fairy tales, then there is no real GOD, and there can be no judgment or consequences for any behavior in which one engages except that which is rendered by his peers.

In order to advocate their fantasies, liberals resort to making the "sons of GOD" angels. Usually they will make one of two distinctions, i.e., either they are the angels of GOD, or they are fallen angels which inhabit men's bodies. With regard to angels as a whole, it would not have been possible to mate with human beings.

> "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of GOD in Heaven" (Matthew 22:30).

The implication of the above passage is that angels do not (cannot) procreate. They do not have the power to give life. They do not have the power to reproduce themselves. They are supernatural beings, hence there is no DNA. Also, it would seem to this writer that if one were dealing with angels procreating with humans, one would have a half-human/half-angel, but the context says they were men. Again, these concepts are simply fantasy to try to remove GOD from existence.

> *"I cannot accept that view, because, if these were good angels, they would not commit this sin, and evil angels could never be designated as 'sons of God'"* (McGee, p. 36).

Let it be remembered that chapter five showed that there had been a clear distinction between those who were following GOD and those who had departed from him. If man is not careful, what happens with time? Man begins to mingle the two together, and evil results. Did not GOD command His people to remain separate from the Canaanites when they left Egypt and entered the promised land? Why did GOD command that separation?

> "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy

daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deuteronomy 7:3-4).

It is this writer's studied conclusion that the "sons of GOD" were those who were striving to be faithful to GOD — from the lineage of Seth. Whereas the "daughters of men" represent those from the lineage of Cain, who departed from GOD. The idea of "sons of GOD" as being those who follow GOD is found throughout the Scriptures. The fact should not be discarded that angels are also sometimes referred to as "sons of GOD" (Job 1-2). But this is not the usage in this present text.

Man often likes to claim that his association with evil people will not influence him to be evil. Or he will point to the evil products of men and say that they do not influence him (movies, pornography, alcohol, et cetera). GOD is clearly shows man in these chapters that the co-mingling of good and evil can and does have an effect on righteous men. Thus, these evil influences must be avoided as much as possible.

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

"Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Corinthians 15:33 – NKJV).

Further, one should observe the basis upon which they were choosing their wives. Their choices were not based upon inner beauty (godliness); they were based on outer beauty – physical attraction. When making such a decision, it is often forgotten that physical beauty fades with time, but inner beauty has the possibility of growing more beautiful.

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

"For I delight in the law of GOD after the inward man" (Romans 7:22).

Another thing to consider are the words "took them wives of all which they chose." It may be that this signals the practice of widespread polygamy.

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

"And Jehovah said, My spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years." (ASV)

It should be remembered that background is being

shown for what will be said beginning in verse five. What is basically portrayed is those who were loyal to GOD began marrying those in rebellion to Him. Thus, the whole human race was becoming progressively more evil all the time, until they would become "only evil continually."

"not always strive with man" How is it that GOD strives with man? He is all-powerful and can overcome man anytime He wishes. He strives with man through His desire and urging of man to obey Him and thus reap the rewards of obedience.

"his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" This is GOD's proclamation of how long it will be before He brings the end of the earth as it was known then. GOD truly is longsuffering.

> "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of GOD waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:20).

Man had become so evil that if he would not repent, if he would not turn back to holiness in thought and life, GOD would destroy every living thing on the earth (v. 7).

Noah would have been four hundred and eighty years old when GOD made this proclamation. This means that GOD's proclamation to destroy the world would have been between verses thirty-one and thirty-two of chapter five. It was then that He decided to destroy the world — but He found righteous Noah, the details of which are shown beginning in verse eight.

During this time of longsuffering, Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

> "Spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5).

It was during that time that "the spirits in prison" were preached to.

> "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of GOD waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:19).

What is a prison? It is a place of confinement. During the one hundred and twenty years the ark was being prepared, the people of Noah's day were confined by boundaries of existence. Their freedom to do what they pleased was limited, and then GOD's judgment would be exercised upon them. But during that time, GOD strove with them for their souls through the preaching of Noah.

It might also be considered that the one hundred and twenty years had nothing to do with how long man would

later live. GOD would later set a general length of time for man to exist on earth.

> "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Psalm 90:10).

Looking at those who lived after the flood, one sees men like Arphaxad who lived five hundred and thirty years, Selah who lived four hundred and three years, et cetera.

This verse is also a refutation of those who think the "sons of GOD" were angels or demons. Note what the Bible teaches with regard to responsibility for sin.

> "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die...Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all My statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:4, 19-20).

The Bible clearly shows that only the law breaker, only the sinner, will be punished for his transgressions. If it were angels which TOOK the women they wanted, then two things are evident. (1) The angels were the ones who sinned and deserved punishment — not man. (2) If the angels took the women, then the women were innocent. In either case, human beings should not be punished, but the angels should. Since it is man who is being punished, it is his sins which are being considered here. Thus, any interpretation which does not consider the "sons of GOD" to be speaking of human beings cannot be accurate.

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

> "The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of GOD came unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." (ASV)

"giants" — nepiyliym — *"Properly, a feller, i.e. a bully or tyrant:--giant"* (Strong's, CD); *"Giant"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 743); *"It means a bully, a tyrant, a giant. It appears three times in the OT (Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33 [twice]). Since the etymology is uncertain, there is much speculation among*

reputable scholars concerning the nature of these individuals. Until more evidence becomes available, perhaps it is wise to do as the rsv and niv translations have done: render it 'Nephilim'" (Zodhiates, CD).

"mighty men" — gibbor — *"Powerful; by implication, warrior, tyrant:-- champion, chief, excel, giant, man, mighty (man, one), strong (man), valiant man"* (Strong's, CD); *"An adjective meaning brave, strong, mighty...The word means manly, strong, vigorous"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 179).

One of the first considerations to be made with regard to this verse is the word "giants." As seen in the definitions above, it does not necessarily mean what most consider when they see this word. The word refers to those who were bullies and tyrants rather than to being large of stature. This fits well the theme of this chapter, which is the "evilness of mankind." For a moment though, let one consider an interesting thought by Morris with regard to size.

> *"One of the most amazing facts revealed by paleontology (the study of fossilized remains of creatures which inhabited the earth in a former age) is that nearly all modern animals were once represented by larger ancestors. One thinks of the mammoths and cave bears, giant cockroaches and dragonflies, and huge reptiles like the dinosaurs. Along with them are occasionally found giant human footprints, suggesting indeed that 'there were giants in the earth in those days.' Not only in the Bible, but in numerous other ancient books, are preserved traditions of giants"* (p. 172).

Physically, are there not giants in the land today? This writer stands six feet and one inch in height and weighs one hundred and ninety pounds. If he were standing beside Shaq O'Neal, who is well over seven feet tall, and weighs over three hundred pounds, would he not consider him to be a giant? But again, the definition of the word used here indicates the description of very evil people. They were those who preyed upon others weaknesses (They preyed while Noah prayed.).

> *"The term in Hebrew implies not so much the idea of great stature as of reckless ferocity, impious and daring characters, who spread devastation and carnage far and wide"* (Jamieson, p. 90).

It is noted that the "giants" were considered men of "renown," i.e., they were widely known and highly honored. How many evil men by GOD's standards are widely known and honored by society today in America? Such is common practice. In fact, America is often guilty of honoring that which is evil and denigrating that which is righteous! Very seldom are just men, righteous men, well known (and

thought well of) by the world.

> "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20)!

America, truly you are rapidly becoming a nation that "lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness" (Psalm 52:3). It should also be considered that the "giants" of this verse are not connected to the offspring of verse two by any conjunction. It is simply stating that there were men of renown in this time, as there have been in any age. Was not Job a man of renown, as well as Moses, Abraham, David, et cetera? Were there not evil men of renown such as King Ahab, et cetera?

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

> "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (ASV)

When considering this verse, one notices a thought which appears in James 1:13-15.

> "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

When man is evil, it is not because of outward circumstances or outward actions. Man is evil when his thoughts (his heart) are evil. The idea is that man had become incapable of thinking an honorable thought. Thus, a man may control his physical action in not committing a physical act; yet, he may indeed be evil because of his thoughts. And no thought of any man can be hidden from GOD. He is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

> "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:18-19).

Gen. 6:6 "And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his Heart."

> "And it repented Jehovah that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." (ASV)

"repented" — naham — *"A primitive root; properly, to sigh,*

i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflexively) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself):--comfort (self), ease (one's self), repent(-er,-ing, self)" (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to be sorry, to pity, to comfort, to avenge. The verb often means to be sorry or to regret"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 723); *"To draw breath forcibly, pant, breathe strongly; to groan; to be sorry; to pity; to grieve; to repent; to take revenge or vengeance; to have compassion, console; to comfort oneself, be comforted. The idea of breathing deeply was a physical display of one's feeling, usually sorrow, compassion, or comfort. Essentially, naMcham is a change of heart or disposition, a change of mind, a change of purpose, or a change of one's conduct"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Be sorry, console oneself"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 636).

"grieved" — asab — *"A primitive root; properly, to carve, i.e. fabricate or fashion; hence (in a bad sense) to worry, pain or anger:-- displease, grieve, hurt, make, be sorry, vex, worship, wrest"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to hurt, to pain, to grieve, to shape, to fashion"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 858); *"This root means to carve, i.e., to fabricate, fashion (later, an image), form, shape; to worry, grieve, be sorrowful; to afflict, to pain; to offend; to be angry. It is a term of physical and mental discomfort"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Hurt, pain, grieve"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 780).

To repent is to have a change of mind. Someone might object here and say, "Wait! GOD is not like man; He does not repent."

> "He is not a man, that He should repent" (1 Samuel 15:29).

> "Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night" (1 Samuel 15:10-11).

Is there a contradiction here? If not, what is the answer? Formerly, GOD had loved and thought highly of king Saul. But that was when Saul chose to follow Him. When Saul turned his back in rebellion to GOD, then GOD had to change His attitude toward Saul. GOD cannot be holy and condone sin, therefore a change of attitude must take place toward those who violate His laws. Further, GOD's action toward and for that individual must change.

> *"When he (man, RK) repents he changes his will. When GOD repents he wills a change"* (Zerr, p. 10).

> *"God in consistency with his immutability, assumes*

a changed position in respect to a changed man" (Lange as quoted by Coffman, p. 104).

To grieve is to sorrow over something. Note what causes GOD to sorrow — man's sin.

"God is hurt no less by the atrocious sins of men than if they pierced His heart with mortal anguish" (Calvin, quoted by Keil-Delitzsch, Vol. 1, p. 140).

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

> "And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth Me that I have made them." (ASV)

This verse shows the extent of the destruction which must take place. All of mankind was to die, and since GOD planned to accomplish this by drowning, then all creatures outside of those which live in the water must die. Sometimes extreme methods must be used to eradicate evil. What if one's hand became infected, and the infection turned into gangrene? Would it not take radical measures to save that person's life? When destructive sin enters the church through one of its members and nothing is done about it, it will grow like a gangrene which can rob the whole congregation of its salvation and power. If the guilty party will not repent after teaching, then the extreme measure of removing him from fellowship **MUST** be done in order to save (at the minimum) the souls of some. Elders who allow sin to go unchecked in a congregation are not wise and in fact are sinning, for they are commanded to watch for the souls of the flock.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Human beings in Noah's day had hardened their hearts. Though given one hundred and twenty years to repent at the preaching of Noah, they would not.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens

under her wings, and ye would not" (Matthew 23:37)!

Gen. 6:8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

"But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah." (ASV)

"grace" — hen — *"Graciousness, i.e. subjective (kindness, favor) or objective (beauty):--favour, grace(-ious), pleasant, precious, (well-)favoured"* (Strong's, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning favor, grace, acceptance. Genesis 6:8 stands as the fundamental application of this word, meaning an unmerited favor of regard in God's sight. Beyond this, however, the word conveys a sense of acceptance or preference in a more general manner"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 354); *"It means favor, kindness, grace, loveliness, charm, preciousness. On most occasions, cheMn is found in the expression, 'Find favor in the eyes of'"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Among the seven billion plus residents of the earth, only Noah found "grace" (favor) in GOD's sight. This is the first time the word grace is found in the Scriptures and the reason Noah found it and thus received salvation is seen in verse nine.

"Salvation in any era is exactly in this way. By sovereign grace, received through faith, the believer is justified before God and declared to be complete in Him" (Morris, p. 177).

In studying this context, there is no doubt that GOD was extremely angry with His disobedient creation. Yet, His wrath is not a blind wrath which cannot see good. In the midst of His justified anger, one sees mercy shining forth.

Gen. 6:9 "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with GOD."

"These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with GOD." (ASV)

"just" — saddiyq — *"Just:--just, lawful, righteous"* (Strong's, CD); *"An adjective meaning just, righteous. The term bears primarily a moral or ethical significance. Someone or something is considered to be just or righteous because of conformity to a given standard. It could be used to describe people or actions in a legal context, indicating they were in accordance with the legal standards; or in a religious context, that they were in accordance with God's standards"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 938); *"It means just, lawful, righteous, honest, right"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Just, righteous, in conduct and character"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 843).

"perfect" — tamiym — *"Entire (literally, figuratively or morally); also (as noun) integrity, truth:--without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright(-ly), whole"* (Strong's, CD); *"An adjective meaning blameless, complete...When used in a moral sense, this word is linked with truth, virtue, uprightness, and righteousness"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1232); *"It means entire (literally, figuratively, or morally) whole, complete, perfect, sound (i.e., free from blemishes in sacrificial victims), faultless, upright in one's conduct, blameless; especially toward God, innocent, simple, honest, sincere; (used as a subst.) honesty, integrity...TaMmi2m is the divine standard which man must attain. He must try to meet all the requirements of God's Law"* (Zodhiates, CD).

This verse tells one why Noah found "grace in the eyes of the Lord." First, he was "just" — he was honest, righteous, and a man who followed GOD's laws. Second, he was "perfect" — he was entire, complete, and morally blameless.

To those who belong to Satan, they see Noah and the account of the flood as nothing more than a myth. It is understandable why they WISH to see it thus. If it is an accurate account (which it is), then it tells them that (1) there is a GOD, (2) He is a GOD who will render just judgment to all men, and (3) His grace takes care of His own (those willing to obey Him). Thus, they wish this account to be a myth, because they realize (at least subconsciously) what it means to their future if it is not a myth.

Did Noah exist? Did the flood take place as recorded? Did the writers of the Bible view Noah as a real person and the events of the flood as being real? One should judge for himself: 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:1-2; Luke 3:36; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5. More important than these witnesses are the words of Jesus.

> "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-27; cf. Matthew 24:37-39).

When one views the statements here made by GOD about Noah, he sees that Noah was as close to absolute perfection as a human being can get. Was he absolutely perfect? No! For only one man ever achieved or will achieve that distinction — Jesus, the Son of GOD. Note that Noah was compared to his peers — "in his generations" — not with GOD. Compared to his generation, Noah was perfect. Man can never achieve absolute perfection in this life, but compared to his fellow man, GOD may declare him so.

The phrase "Noah walked with GOD" is made of only one other person in the Bible — Enoch (Genesis 5:24). This phrase indicates a close communion — the desire to have one as his close friend. Surely the first two verses of Psalm chapter one describe Noah as mentioned in this text.

> "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night."

Noah lived in a way which pleased GOD because he walked in His counsel, he stood with GOD, he chose GOD for companionship. One should note that GOD wants all men to walk with Him in righteousness and close communion.

> "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:6-7).

John also said that one who abides in Christ "ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

Gen. 6:10 "And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth."

> "And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth." (ASV)

There are two thoughts as to why Shem is listed first in these lists. (1) Because he was the firstborn of the three. (2) Because the Messianic lineage goes through him. Either or both could be true, but this writer believes the second is more reasonable in fitting the theme already seen of outlining the Messianic bloodline. Did Noah have other children? If so, why are only these three named? Could it mean they were named because they were faithful, and other children (if any) were not?

Gen. 6:11-12 "The earth also was corrupt before GOD, and the earth was filled with violence. And GOD looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

> "And the earth was corrupt before GOD, and the earth was filled with violence. And GOD saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth." (ASV)

"corrupt" — sahat — *"A primitive root; to decay, i.e. (causatively) ruin (literally or figuratively):--batter, cast off, corrupt(-er, thing), destroy(-er, -uction), lose, mar, perish, spill, spoiler, X utterly, waste(-r)"* (Strongs, CD); *"A verb*

meaning to spoil, to destroy, to pervert, to corrupt, to become corrupt, to wipe out" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1124); *"To decay; to mar; to destroy, devastate; to ruin"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Go to ruin"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 1007).

"violence" — hamas — *"Violence; by implication, wrong; by meton. unjust gain:--cruel(-ty), damage, false, injustice, X oppressor, unrighteous, violence (against, done), violent (dealing), wrong"* (Strongs, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning violence, wrong. It implies cruelty, damage, and injustice"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 351); *"It is violence, oppression, wickedness, wrong, unrighteous gain"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Violence, wrong"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 329).

The first thing to notice in this text is the word "earth." It is not speaking of the ground, plants, animals, et cetera. These things are not corrupt; they simply exist. The text is speaking about mankind — man's moral corruption is the subject (v. 5). The second thing this writer would notice is that GOD said "all flesh" had corrupted itself. The word "corrupted" signifies destruction; man had destroyed himself. How had he done this? GOD had given man instructions which would have allowed him to live forever if obeyed. Man disobeyed those instructions, and death came upon the earth. Another definition of the word "corrupt" is *"to decay."* Man had caused his moral position to decay by continuing to disobey GOD. This "corruption" always takes place when man turns away from GOD. He goes from a higher position to a lower one. They had corrupted their "way," which is something only a moral being can do.

> *"They had corrupted their way. It was not, therefore, the result of intermarriages with superhuman beings that produced the debauchery of mankind; it was simply due to their willful choice of evil conduct"* (Coffman, p. 106).

The universal corruption of man is being pointed out here. Man often rebels at the notion of using a term which designates all-inclusiveness — "all the earth." Whenever he uses such a word to describe a general situation, he will almost immediately apologize by saying something like, *"Of course we understand that not everybody is included in this."* This is done to accommodate thin-skinned people. GOD does not do such. If one is guilty, then the shoe fits. If he is not, then why is he complaining? Maybe he objects because he is guilty.

"the earth was filled with violence" The word "violence" deals with injustice, cruelty and wickedness. Man was treating man as if the *"law of the jungle"* was the way to live instead of following GOD's dictates to love one another and

treat each other with justice and equity.

> "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

What Jesus said in the above passage is what is sometimes called a *"universal law,"* i.e., a law which applies to all ages (Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian).

One should also note the longsuffering of GOD as seen here. GOD had not "gone on a long journey" without realizing what His creation was doing. He had not "just now" learned of its corruption. He had been observing the whole process and had finally made the decision that human beings had gone too far and this needed to be stopped. This writer has considered the Devil in this. When GOD first made the decision to destroy the creation (before looking at Noah), can the reader not imagine Satan jumping with joy? Can it not be imagined, that if Satan knew about Noah, he would hope that GOD did not discover him, because he knew the nature of GOD (His grace)? Like Jonah, Satan knew how GOD would deal with the justified.

Gen. 6:13 "And GOD said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

> "And GOD said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (ASV)

Note the word "all;" yet, GOD was speaking to Noah and planned to save his family.

Why is GOD going to destroy mankind? Because the earth is "filled with violence." The word "filled" comes from the Hebrew male, which *"denotes the completion of something that was unfinished or the filling of something that was empty"* (Zodhiates, CD). In other words, GOD had shown His longsuffering until finally there was no room for any more mercy. Man has blown his last opportunity; now he will die in GOD's judgment.

"I will destroy them with the earth." Some have disputed that the earth was destroyed. They wish to interpret this as "I will destroy them from the earth," thus, signifying only man.

> "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:5-6).

Part of the definition of shachath is to *"devastate; to ruin"* (Zodhiates, CD). *Is that not exactly what was done to the*

earth? The earth was drastically changed from what it had been. Note this from a quote found in Coffman's comments.

> *"Francis Schaeffer mentions in detail the example of prehistoric mammals of great size having been uncovered in the frozen wastes of Siberia, an area supposed to have been uniformly cold for thousands of years; and yet, whenever those tropical creatures froze, it took place so quickly that the plants found in their mouths, neither spit out nor swallowed, were still in the process of being eaten!"* (p. 107).

When one drives down a highway in a mountainous area, he can easily see the layers of earth which have buckled and bent and, in some cases, are thrown back upon themselves so that the layers are piled upside down on themselves. Truly the earth was drastically devastated with change.

Gen. 6:14-15 "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits."

> "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits." (ASV)

"ark" — tebah — *"A box:--ark"* (Strong's, CD); *"A feminine noun referring to an ark; a basket. It is used in two cases: to depict the ark of Noah; and to depict the basket in which Moses was hidden. In both cases, persons were rescued from water"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1211).

"cubit" — ammah — *"Properly, a mother (i.e. unit of measure, or the fore-arm (below the elbow), i.e. a cubit; also a door-base (as a bond of the entrance):--cubit, + hundred (by exchange for 3967), measure, post"* (Strong's, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning, measure, cubit. The basic meaning is forearm...The ordinary cubit was about 50 centimeters long, 18 inches, and the longer cubit in Ezekiel was about 58 centimeters long, 22 inches"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 67).

GOD told Noah to build an ark (chest or box). The general idea of an ark is a vessel in which something can be placed for safe keeping. The word itself tells one nothing as to its shape.

Noah was next told to build the ark out of "gopher wood." No one today knows what this wood was. The usual suppositions are that it was either cypress or cedar.

These two woods are chosen as guesses because they are very good for building, and they are common in the area of Palestine. But here is an important question which also cannot be answered: Where was the ark built? To say that it was built in any particular place in the world is to make an assumption which cannot be proven. It may in fact have been built somewhere hundreds or thousands of miles removed.

Noah was then told that "rooms" were to be built inside the ark. The word "rooms" comes from qen, which is a masculine noun meaning *"nest."* It refers to homes for birds and animals and signifies a safe dwelling place.

Next, Noah was told to "cover" (NKJV) the ark. The word "cover" was used, because that is the meaning of the word "pitch" used in verse fourteen.

> *"At its most basic level, the word conveys the notion of covering but not in the sense of merely concealing. Rather, it suggests the imposing of something to change its appearance or nature. It is therefore employed to signify the cancellation of 'writing over' of a contract; the appeasing of anger; and the overlaying of wood with pitch so as to make it waterproof. The word also communicates God's covering of sin"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 521).

Verse fifteen gives the measurements Noah was to use in building the ark. Most generally believe the "cubit" to be a measurement of eighteen inches. Three hundred cubits in length (450 feet), fifty cubits wide (75 feet), and thirty cubits high (45 feet). Note that these are the dimensions for a rectangular box, not the dimensions of a sea-going vessel where one end is pointed (bow). The reason for a bow (as found in modern ships) is because they are going somewhere, and (coupled with the rudder) this is how a ship's direction is determined. In the ark which Noah made, there was no need for a bow, because all it was intended to do was float and preserve the life which was within it.

> *"The common cubit was about 18 inches in length, the supposed average distance from the point of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger (Deut. 3:11). There was another cubit known, however, which was a handbreadth longer than the common cubit. Petrie, the noted Egyptologist, expresses the view that even the common cubit measured 22 ½ inches"* (Crawford, Vol. 2, p. 490).

This vessel was huge, having a capacity to carry over 1.4 million cubic feet of cargo.

> *"Marine experts have estimated that since the ark was built with a flat bottom and there was no wasted space on the bow or stern, it being square on both ends and straight up on its side, it would have a*

displacement of about 43,000 tons, a displacement nearly equal to that of the ill-fated Titanic" (Crawford, p. 491).

"It was not until 1884 apparently that a vessel, the Eturia, a Cunard liner, was built with a length exceeding that of the Ark" (Custance, quoted by Whitcomb, p. 11).

A ship of this tremendous size is a clear argument against the "local-flood" theory, which some advance to try to escape a world-wide flood. If the flood was only local in nature, why would one need a vessel this large to escape it? In fact, since Noah was warned one hundred and twenty years before the event, the logical thing would have been simply to move to another land. Those who deny a universal flood are simply trying to deny GOD and affirm the tenants of evolution, which state that uniformitarianism is the way all things have progressed in this world.

What about the stability of such a ship? Could it withstand the waves caused by the eruptions of water from the deep?

"It can be shown hydrodynamically that a gigantic box of such dimensions could be exceedingly stable, almost impossible to capsize. Even in a sea of gigantic waves, the ark could be tilted through any angle up to just short of 90 degrees and would immediately thereafter right itself again. Furthermore, it would tend to align itself parallel with the direction of major wave advance and thus be subject to minimum pitching most of the time" (Morris, p. 181).

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

"A light shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it." (ASV)

"window" — sohar — *"A light (i.e. window): dual double light, i.e. noon:--midday, noon(-day, -tide), window"* (Strong's, CD); *"A masculine noun meaning noon, midday...A masculine noun meaning window space"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 941).

The first thing noticed in this verse is a "window." This would be necessary for ventilation and light. Almost every commentary this writer consulted believes this was a space one cubit in height which went all the way around the ark. This would require supports from time to time. In modern

times this would be called many windows, calling each space between the supports a window. There are some who think this might have been some kind of low wall which went around the top of the ark. But the Hebrew word, as noted above, clearly shows that however this was made, it had the purpose of allowing light inside. It also would have allowed for the accumulation of drinking water.

"the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof" One door. Not a door for each deck. The symbolism here is evident to Christians. There was only one way for those who would escape the destruction which was about to come upon the earth in the flood. They had to enter the vessel through the one opening it provided. Today if one would enter into the safety of Heaven, he must enter through the one opening through which he can get there — Christ.

> "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep...I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:7, 9).

"lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it" The word "stories" is not found in the original, but it is implied and added for easier understanding by the reader.

The reader should note that not every detail is given, because every detail is not needed. The important thing is that enough detail is given that one can understand that this was an extremely stable vessel. Further, with the dimensions given and the knowledge of three interior levels, it would have held a tremendous cargo.

> *"Peter Jensen of Holland in 1609 proved by actual experiment that a ship constructed after the pattern of the ark, though not adapted for sailing, would in reality carry a cargo greater by one-third than any other form of like cubic content. The stability of the ark was such that it would have to be turned completely vertical before it could be tipped over"* (Smith, p. 89).

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

> "And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon this earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die." (ASV)

"A flood" The word "flood" (mabbul) is unique, in that it is not the normal word for flood in the Hebrew language. This word is only used to describe the flood which destroyed the earth. Interestingly, in the New Testament when the flood of Noah's day is described, the Greek word

is also not the usual word in the Greek language for flood (Matthew 24:39; Luke 17:27; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6). There it is κατακλυσμός (kataklusmos), *"To flood or overflow. A flood, deluge"* (Thayer). This was not a local flood; it was different from a local flood when the above words are considered — it was cataclysmic. **The Spirit is showing by this choice of words that there was no other flood like this flood — and there will never be another like it.**

The term "the breath of life, from under heaven" shows that every creature on the earth and in the heavens which breathed air would be destroyed. This would eliminate, of course, the fish of the seas.

Gen. 6:18-21 "But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them."

> "But I will establish My covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them." (ASV)

"covenant" — beriyt — *"A compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh):--confederacy, (con-)feder(-ate), covenant, league"* (Strong's, CD); *"Determination, stipulation, covenant. The kjv also translates it as 'league' and 'confederacy.' The fem. noun may come from baMraMh. See Gen. 15:9 for the ancient custom of ratifying solemn covenants by passing between the divided parts of victims"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning covenant, treaty, alliance, agreement"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 165).

Because of the covenant GOD would make with Noah (Genesis 9:9ff), Noah and his immediate family must needs go into the ark when it was finished. Some have thought the covenant spoken of here went all the way back to Adam and Eve in the Garden. But note carefully the words spoken here — "with thee will I establish My covenant." This was a covenant to be made specifically with Noah.

Not only were Noah and his family to be saved, but pairs of all the species on earth would be saved in the ark. It should be noted that one pair of each species is the general rule. There would be an exception to this rule, that being the clean animals (of which seven pairs of each would go on board). The creatures are in pairs of male and its female so that reproduction may take place after they leave the ark. There will be no miraculous replenishing of the animals on the earth — it will be all by natural law.

There is something ominous here — only Noah and his immediate family will enter the ark. GOD knew that no one else would accept the saving message Noah would preach. No one else except these eight will accept GOD's invitation for salvation. Is this an indication of things to come many years later? Jesus spoke of the final destruction of the world and the judgment, and notice the illustration He used.

> "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:36-39).

Indeed, the majority of souls in that final day will be lost, because they refuse the salvation Jesus offers.

> "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

They will not find it because (1) they are not looking for it, (2) they care only about the present, (3) they have little or no desire for spiritual things, and (4) they have no respect or regard for GOD and His word.

Some over the years have stated that it must have been a massive job to gather all of these animals, birds, et cetera into the ark. Like the Sadducees, they "do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of GOD" (Matthew 22:29). In verse nineteen, Noah was told to "bring into the ark" these creatures. In verse twenty, Noah was told that the creatures "shall come unto thee, to keep them alive." Noah did not have to go out, find the animals, and bring them to the ark. All of these creatures would come to Noah, directed there by GOD, and then it would be Noah's responsibility to put them into the ark.

How could so many creatures fit into the ark? This is a question which has been asked by skeptics over the years. MacArthur (and others) say that there are approximately eighteen thousand (18,000) species known on the earth, which would mean thirty-six thousand (36,000) creatures

(male and female). Even if one were to double this number, there would have been seventy-two thousand (72,000) creatures on the ark. The dimensions of the ark would have provided the space for one hundred and twenty-five thousand (125,000) sheep. Consider that the average size of all land animals is smaller than that of a sheep. There was far more room for the animals than was needed. Thus, room was left for Noah and his family's quarters and for all the food which was needed to keep them alive.

Note also that GOD would not feed the inhabitants of the ark with miracles. This was work which would need to be done by Noah and his family. GOD has always given mankind work to be done — GOD does not do for man what he can do for himself. Imagine the boredom of Adam's family for a whole year if they had nothing to do. Further, the muscles of the body deteriorate rapidly when they remain at rest for long.

Gen. 6:22 "Thus did Noah; according to all that GOD commanded him, so did he."

> "Thus did Noah; according to all that GOD commanded him, so did he." (ASV)

Why did Noah do all that GOD told him to do? The answer is quite simple. He did it because of faith, i.e., he believed that when GOD said something, GOD meant it. If GOD said there were going to be a flood, then there was surely going to be a flood. GOD said there was only one way to be saved from this flood — by building and getting into the ark. Noah built the ark exactly as GOD told him to do it.

> "By faith Noah, being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

Would the human race still exist if Noah believed GOD was going to destroy the earth but had not built the ark? Only the foolish would answer "yes." The point being that Noah had to believe GOD and then do what GOD said to be saved and to save the human race. The faith that saves has always been, and will always be, the faith that obeys GOD. The foolish, fabricating, and fraudulent today, say that all one has to do is believe and he will be saved — tell that nonsense to Noah and see what kind of reaction one gets. It is interesting to note that commentaries written by denominational people avoid saying very much about this passage or try to explain it away or go off on a tangent to things really unrelated to the meaning of the verse. Why? Because it is evident that Noah's obedience was key to his

salvation. They do not like teaching which requires one to obey GOD's directions for salvation.

"By obedience, faith discovers its existence" (Smith, p. 90).

Genesis Chapter Seven

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

"And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." (ASV)

"righteous" — saddiyq — *"Just:--just, lawful, righteous (man)"* (Strong's, CD); *"An adjective meaning just, righteous. The term bears primarily a moral or ethical significance. Someone or something is considered to be just or righteous because of conformity to a given standard"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 937); *"It means just, lawful, righteous, honest, right"* (Zodhiates, CD).

The time had come, and GOD told Noah to come into the ark with his family. Notice the word "come," which signifies to move toward something. In the context, this would seem to indicate that GOD is in the ark, not literally of course, but figuratively. This would give Noah and his family confidence that GOD would be with them as these events unfolded — protecting them, caring for them.

Why did GOD call Noah and his family into the ark? Because Noah was righteous. What makes a person righteous? Simply put, doing what is right according to a standard set by a higher power — what GOD has determined is right! A righteous man is a just man, a man who follows the law he has been given, an honest man.

The faith of Noah is often talked about, but what about the faith of his family? They also demonstrated faith by entering into the ark. Consider by comparison Lot's wife, who was told to leave Sodom and not look back. When it came to the crucial moment, she did not have the faith to obey GOD fully. GOD said to come into the ark, and Noah's family did not hesitate. Noah and his family did not look back — they left everything behind.

When considering the destruction of human life in the flood, some will accuse GOD of being a terrible GOD who looks for the opportunity to punish man. They do this because of their warped sense of justice, and really their desire for a lack of real justice. Man does not look at the fact that GOD had been longsuffering with mankind and had striven in every way to get them to do what is right —

but they refused.

> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:37-38).

After declaring that He would destroy the world, He gave the people one hundred and twenty years to repent (Genesis 6:3; 1 Peter 3:20), but again, they would not. GOD gave those who perished the justice they deserved.

Gen. 7:2-3 "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth."

> "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female: of the birds also of the heavens, seven and seven, male and female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." (ASV)

Note that these two verses are another evidence that the flood was universal. *Why gather these animals into the ark?* "to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth" (Emphasis mine, RK). If a local flood was being discussed, the animals in the rest of the world would not be destroyed. They could and would have repopulated the flooded area where all the animals had died. There would have been no need to preserve seed in an ark.

For the first time, one sees a distinction made in the animal world. (To see what made an animal clean or unclean, one can look at Exodus chapter eleven.) It should be noted that a distinction existed between clean and unclean animals **before** the law of Moses and before they entered the ark. This had probably been instituted in the very beginning by GOD. One pair of each species of unclean animals was to be taken into the ark for preservation. But of the clean animals and fowl "by sevens." What does this term "by sevens" mean? Some believe it means that seven of each clean species were to be taken into the ark. Those who think this is the case believe there would have been three pairs, with the seventh one used for sacrifice when Noah and his family came off of the ark. One of the things forgotten by those who advocate this is verse nine, where one is told that everything which went into the ark did so by pairs ("two by two"), including the human beings. Seven pairs of each clean species were taken. Why would one need so many of the clean animals compared to the unclean? (1) Because an unclean animal could not be offered in

sacrifice to GOD, and sacrifices would be needed. (2) Because after they left the ark, GOD would tell them to eat flesh; whereas before the flood, they were not allowed to eat flesh. (Details of this will be seen later in the studies of chapter nine.)

This may be as good a time as any to bring up the subject of dinosaurs. Were there dinosaurs on the ark? One cannot know today whether there were or not. It would seem to this author that they likely were not. His reasoning is this: GOD knew that the earth was going to be drastically different after the flood. The huge amounts of tropical vegetation needed to keep these creatures alive would no longer exist, because the earth would no longer be tropical. The evidence that it was tropical all over the world is seen in the fact of dinosaurs which were frozen in Siberia with the tropical vegetation still in their mouths and undigested in their stomachs. The poor evolutionists have a terrible time trying to explain that with their uniformitarian theories. If there were dinosaurs on the ark, who says they or any of the other animals had to be adults when they entered the ark? If they were on the ark, those which survived the flood did not survive for long.

Critics of the Bible like to say that there is a contradiction between these verses under consideration and what is said in Genesis 6:20. Where is the contradiction? Chapter six dealt with a generalization; the present chapter fills in some of the details.

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

> "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground." (ASV)

"destroy" — mahah — *"A primitive root; properly, to stroke or rub; by implication, to erase"* (Strong's, CD); *"A verb meaning to wipe, to wipe out. This term is often connected to divine judgment"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 593); *"To wipe, wipe off; to blot out; to adjoin, touch on; to be wiped off, be removed, be effaced; to be destroyed"* (Zodhiates, CD);*"Strike"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs, p. 562).

An interesting detail given in this passage is the mention of seven days. The number seven is commonly used in the Scriptures to represent perfection. Sometimes it is used figuratively to express the idea that when everything is complete, then a particular event will take place. Seven is also used to represent a literal seven days. This writer believes it is a literal seven, days and that Noah is being warned that he has seven days to finish all preparations.

Another thing which one notices is that GOD said it is going to rain for forty days and forty nights on the whole earth — a continuous rain during this time.

> *"A worldwide rain lasting forty days would be quite impossible under present atmospheric conditions; so this phenomenon required an utterly different source of atmospheric waters than now obtains. This we have already seen to be the 'waters above the firmament,' the vast thermal blanket of invisible water vapor that maintained the greenhouse effect in the antediluvian world. These waters somehow were to condense and fall on the earth"* (Morris, p. 191).

It should also be noted that GOD not only caused it to rain for forty days and nights, but at the same time He unleashed the "fountains of the great deep" (Genesis 7:11).

When GOD opened the heavens and unleashed the deep, the result would be that "every living substance" would die. This included the plant life, as well as all flesh. Just here one might consider coal.

> *"A black or brownish-black solid combustible substance formed by the partial decomposition of vegetable matter without free access of air and under the influence of moisture and often increased pressure and temperature that is widely used as a natural fuel"* (Webster, CD).

Coal comes from plants which have died. Question: Under normal circumstances, when plants die, what happens to them? They either dry up or rot. They do not become coal. Why? Because to become coal, plants have to be buried where **no air can** get to them, and there must be tremendous weight (pressure) applied to them. Considering the unbelievable amounts of coal found all over the world, how did those coal seams come to exist? Further, one should consider a like occurrence — fossils! When an animal dies in the woods, what happens to it? Does it turn into a fossil, or does it rot away? The flesh having rotted away (or having been eaten by other animals, birds, bugs, et cetera), what happens to the bones? They also are gradually consumed as well — as every serious hunter knows. In order to have a fossil, the creature which dies must be buried immediately, just like the plants which turned into coal. Consider also the huge amount of plant life it would take to make one coal seam, much less those found all over the world.

Gen. 7:5 "And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him."

> "And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him." (ASV)

Here again one sees the compelling and powerful statement that Noah did everything GOD commanded him to do (Genesis 6:22), exactly as GOD commanded it to be done. When GOD told Noah to do something, he did it — do we act like Noah? This is truly the "secret" for pleasing GOD and gaining His everlasting approval — obedience.

> "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22, emphasis mine, RK).

> "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9, emphasis mine, RK).

Gen. 7:6-9 "And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as GOD had commanded Noah."

> "And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creepeth upon the ground, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, male and female, as GOD commanded Noah." (ASV)

More details on this will be given later in the chapter. What must be emphasized again is that this was not a natural disaster, such as sometimes occurs today in a limited area. In this century, great disasters have been seen due to hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, et cetera. But they are always local. This text shows universal disaster brought upon mankind as punishment for his sins. It foreshadows another event — the final judgment when all which presently exists will be destroyed.

> "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be

dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:9-13).

The original world was destroyed by water; the next destruction will be instantaneous with fire. The first destruction left the non-living material elements intact; the second will cause them to cease to exist. Only the righteous were rewarded physical life after the first destruction; only the righteous will have eternal life with GOD after the second destruction.

"There actually was not one single person outside of the family of Noah whom divine grace could save" (Leupold, Vol. 1, p. 293).

Gen. 7:10-12 "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

"And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." (ASV)

Just as GOD promised, after seven days the flood began. One is also informed of the exact time the flood began. This information will serve (with further information) to determine the exact length of the flood. The text also states how long the rains lasted — forty days and forty nights. It is assumed by this author that the fountains of the deep continued to spew forth their waters during this entire span of time as well. This author has gone through the monsoons of Asia and thought it would never stop raining. Imagine forty days and nights when it seems to have continuously rained extremely hard, not to mention the fountains of the deep. One of the theories for the fountains of the deep is noted below.

"Such a thing might have been due to the sudden swelling and lifting of the ocean floor; which, if it returned later, would also have expedited the draining off of the flood waters. It is, of course, explicit that men cannot know <u>how</u> it happened"

(Coffman, p. 118).

This author believes that the fountains of the deep's erupting ("broken up") has something to do with great earthquakes and volcanos which opened up great reservoirs of water under the earth's surface.

> *"The sequence in this verse, indicating that the earth's crust breaks up first, then the heavens drop their water, is interesting because the volcanic explosions that would have occurred when the earth fractured would have sent magma and dust into the atmosphere, along with gigantic sprays of water, gas, and air — all penetrating the canopy and triggering its downpour"* (MacArthur, p. 24).

From an earlier study of Genesis 2:6, it seems that the streams, rivers, lakes and oceans were not fed by rainfall as they were after the flood. This would mean that they existed because of springs deep under the earth.

> "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth" (Job 38:16)?

It is good to consider the date given for the beginning of the flood. It is stated as being in the six hundredth year of Noah's life. In that year, it was "in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month." Some have speculated that this preciseness was done in order to show the exact time from the beginning of the earth. It is this writer's opinion that the important thing to consider is not the six hundred years of Noah's life, but rather the day and year so that a time-frame can be established for the length of the flood from the time Noah went into the ark until the time he left it.

Gen. 7:13-16 "In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as GOD had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in."

> "In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as GOD commanded him: and Jehovah shut him

in." (ASV)

There are several things to notice in these verses. The first thing is that there were **only eight people** who entered the ark. Of all that vast population, **only eight people** heeded the message of GOD. **Only eight** would remain in a purified world. What a tragedy to consider, and yet, it is really no different today. As a Christian, does one consider how many are lost compared to the saved in today's world?

What faith they had! First, they believed GOD's words. Second, being convinced that the world was going to be destroyed, they waited to go in until GOD told them to go in.

More detail is given as to the creatures going into the ark. Not only was it the beasts of the field, but also those things which "creepeth" on the earth and the fowl of the air. Involved with that is another detail which could easily be overlooked. One is told that it was GOD who shut the door of the ark. This shows the control of GOD in this matter. There was no lingering, there was no hope that one more might join them in the ark of safety — because GOD shut the door. Those outside the ark had had their opportunity to obey GOD. There was not going to be one more chance, and then maybe another, as it might have been if a human being were making the decision. This emphasizes that when GOD decides that time is over, it will be over! When man's soul is separated from his body, there will not be another opportunity in the Hadean world for him to change his destiny. The rich man had a change of thinking (repentance), but he could not change his eternal destiny (Luke 16).

Beginning with the next verse, the Bible describes the great world-wide flood. The importance of this flood is immense, because it shows how devastating sin is. But it also reveals a GOD whose mercy has limits, One who will not tolerate sin, and One who will bring just retribution to those who thumb their noses at His rules. This *"retribution is so disturbingly unwelcome that men have tried for ages somehow to explain it away and forget it"* (Morris, p. 199). These waters would destroy the world's evil population, but they would also save those who were obedient to GOD's will.

> "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward GOD,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

Today, the waters of baptism will save all who submit themselves to GOD, just as Noah was saved by water **"as GOD had commanded him**." **But**, just as in the days of Noah, those who will not submit to GOD's conditions will be

eternally lost.

Gen. 7:17-20 "And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered."

> "And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered." (ASV) and the mountains were covered." (NKJV)

These verses show the extent of the flood. The waters increased until the tallest mountains were covered. But the water did not stop there. One is told that the waters continued to grow deeper until the highest mountain was fifteen cubits under water ("covered" — kasah — *"A verb meaning to cover, to clothe, to conceal"* – Baker/Carpenter, p. 515). This is a remarkable detail, because a vessel the size of the ark, with the tonnage it carried, would have needed this depth of water in order to clear these mountains. This depth shows that it could not have been a local flood, and further Moses confirms this as a universal flood — "all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered" (emphasis mine, RK).

Regarding the global flood, it is interesting that so many ancient cultures have a story about a universal flood. Note what MacArthur said about this.

> *"There are over 270 flood stories told in cultures all over the earth, which owe their origin to this one global event"* (p. 24).

> *"This must be added, that, apart from the legend of a flood, which is found in nearly every nation, the earth presents unquestionable traces of submersion in the fossil remains of animals and plants, which are found upon the Cordilleras and Himalaya even beyond the limit of perpetual snow"* (Keil/Delitzsch, Vol. 1, p. 147).

> *"It should be noted that faith in the Bible is confidently affirmed by some of the greatest scientists. It is only those who are drunk upon a*

little learning who brashly deny the Bible" (Coffman, p. 121).

Gen. 7:21-24 "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days."

> "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days." (ASV)

Here one sees a general listing of all living things which were destroyed in the flood. It should be noticed that it is particularly noted that the destruction was for all creatures which lived "in the dry land." Thus, marine life was excluded from the destruction. If this were only a local flood, then many of the creatures could have escaped by fleeing to higher ground. Birds could have flown to higher ground in a local flood. In a universal flood, they could only swim so long or fly until exhaustion caused them to plummet into the waters and drown.

It is also stated that the waters "prevailed" on the earth for one hundred and fifty days. During this whole time, the waters remained above the highest mountain and did not recede. Noah and his family have been in the ark at the end of this period for one hundred and ninety days (over six months).

What about the plant life? "every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground" Unless kept alive miraculously, all plant life would be destroyed as well. One often does not consider that grass, plants, and trees need carbon dioxide to survive. Being buried under water for such a long time would have caused them to die and decay — thus, the huge coal fields found all over the world. How could the plant life exist after the flood? GOD has not revealed that to man, but if this author were to guess, it would have to be through some miraculous means, because (again) plant life on land cannot continue to live when buried for such a long time.

Why should man believe in a universal flood? First, and most importantly, because GOD said it was universal with all the terminology of chapters five through eight. In his commentary on Genesis, Morris lists twenty-six reasons why man should believe in a universal flood. Consider six of the reasons he gave.

> *"(21) God's promise never to send such a Flood again (Genesis 8:21; 9:11, 15) had been broken repeatedly if it were only a local or regional flood.*
> *(22) The New Testament uses a unique term (kataklusmos 'cataclysm') for the flood (Matthew 24:39; Luke 17:27; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6) instead of the usual Greek word for 'flood.'*
> *(23) New cosmological conditions came into being after the Flood, including sharply defined seasons (Genesis 8:22), the rainbow along with rain (Genesis 2:5; 9:13-14), and enmity between man and beasts (Genesis 9:2).*
> *(24) Man's longevity began a long, slow decline immediately after the Flood (compare Genesis 5 and Genesis 11).*
> *(25) Later Biblical writers accepted the universal Flood (note Job 12:15; 22:16; Psalm 29:10; 104:6-9; Isaiah 54:9; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:5-6; Hebrews 11:7).*
> *(26) The Lord Jesus Christ accepted the historicity and universality of the Flood, even making it the climactic sign and type of the coming worldwide judgment when He returns (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27)"* (p. 203).

Over the years, too many Christians, and those who believe the Bible, have allowed the pseudo-educated to intimidate them into saying there was no universal flood — that it is just a myth. When given the choice of believing GOD or believing men, "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of GOD" (John 14:23).

In chapter eight, geological evidence will be examined as to the fact that a universal flood has taken place.

Note faith being rewarded — "Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark." GOD told him there would be a flood, and he believed Him. Then when GOD told him to build the ark in order to survive, Noah acted on that faith. When GOD told Noah the time had come to enter the ark, he believed Him and entered. His faith was rewarded with safety as all other human beings and animals drowned.

> "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. By faith Noah, being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to

the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:6-7).

When man exercises the same kind of faith which Noah exhibited, then he, too, will receive the reward promised by a merciful almighty GOD — eternal life with the Father.

Genesis — Chapter Eight

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

"And GOD remembered Noah, and all the beasts, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and GOD made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;" (ASV)

"Then GOD remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And GOD made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided." (NKJV)

One does not know if there were any communication between GOD and man during man's time in the ark. Neither does one know if GOD told Noah how long he would be in the ark. What is seen here is a loving GOD who does not forget His creation.

"remembered" — zakhar — *"to remember, recollect, reflect upon"* (Zodhiates, CD). Morris states that the term "remembered" is a Hebraism which signified *"began again to act on their behalf"* (p. 205).

Reflecting upon the part of creation He saved, He sent "a wind" upon the earth and caused the water to subside. Wind is moving air which makes things dry quickly. This writer has observed multiplied times over the years how everything is dried out by the winds which follow storms. One might also look ahead to Exodus 14:21, where GOD used the wind to carve a path through the Red Sea to save His people from the Egyptian army. GOD used a natural element to accomplish His purpose, yet magnified it.

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

"the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;" (ASV)

"The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained." (NKJV)

As easily as a man would turn off a valve in a sink, GOD

simply turned the water off. He stopped the rain from heaven and shut up the fountains of the deep. This should remind man of the awesome power of GOD. If GOD chose to do so, He could stop the rains (which would cause a great drought). He can end this world anytime He chooses with a mere word.

> "Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD GOD of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word...And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth" (1 Kings 17:1— 18:1).

Drought in the Bible is sometimes used as a punishment for sin by GOD.

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

> "and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased." (ASV)
>
> "And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased." (NKJV)

It took the waters one hundred and fifty days to leave the land masses ("returned" — *"retreated"*). Truly this is another indication of the universal aspect of this flood. Local floods take only a matter of days, or at the most a couple of weeks, to return to their river beds and streams. Only a short time is needed before the land can be used again. As can be seen later, this verse only speaks of the water's leaving the land that it had covered — not the drying of the land.

Where did the water go? Did it simply go back underground from whence it came and back into the atmosphere? Certainly some of it went back under ground and into the atmosphere. But consider the earth and the evidence it gives of land masses tossed to and fro. Drive down a highway which has been cut through the mountains and observe the layers of earth and their many contortions. A violent change had come upon the earth, possibly even the ripping apart of land masses (creating the continents, islands, et cetera). Were the oceans already in existence before the flood, or were they created because of the opening of the fountains of the deep (volcanos)? Or were the oceans, if already in existence, deepened to hold the waters which flowed from the land? Note an interesting passage with regard to the question of where the waters went as asked above.

"Thou coveredst it (the earth, RK) with the deep as with a vesture (a covering garment — the whole earth covered as with a blanket, RK); The waters stood above the mountains (Psalm 104:6, RK).

"At Thy rebuke they fled; At the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away (The mountains rose, the valleys sank down) Unto the place which Thou hadst founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; That they turn not again to cover the earth" (Psalm 104:6-9, ASV).

Note also the NKJV on verse eight of the above text.

"They went up over the mountains; They went down into the valleys, To the place which You founded for them."

Note particularly the phrase "the mountains rose, the valleys sank down" and consider the legend (if it be a legend) of Atlantis. In such a world-wide flood, there would have been many valleys filled with civilizations, which "sank down" and are now covered by the oceans and seas. Not long ago, this writer and his wife watched a program on television which spoke of structures found in the oceans and seas all over the world which appear to have been man-made and suggested roads and cities which were now under water. It is repeated — these are found all over the world.

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

"And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." (ASV)

"Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat." (NKJV)

When asked where the ark "landed," the answer most often heard is *"Mount Ararat."* But notice that the Bible says it "rested...upon the mountains of Ararat" — plural (the area of modern day Armenia). A specific mountain is not designated, but rather a range of mountains which actually contains two specific mountains named Ararat (Greater and Lesser Ararat). The Bible does not pinpoint an exact place but rather an area in which the ark landed, and it is a vast area. It should also be pointed out that this word "Ararat" is also translated in the KJV as Armenia.

"In Biblical usage Ararat is a country; see 2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38; Jeremiah 51:27" (Leupold, p. 312).

Note the description of this area as given by Coffman.

"'Upon the mountains of Ararat...' This designates, not a particular peak, but a district, described by

Skinner thus: 'It is the province of Armenia lying NE of Lake Van, including the fertile plain watered by the Araxes, on the right (SW) side of which Mt. Massis rises.' The area is that which lies along the alluvial plain of the Aras (Araxes) river near the point where the three borders of the Soviet Union, Iran and Turkey come together. Out of this region there rise two peaks, the Greater and the Lesser Ararat. The Greater rising to an elevation of 16,945' and the Lesser to a height of 12,877' above sea level. The plain itself is about 3,000' altitude. The peaks are in Turkish territory. Either of these peaks, or any of the foothills could have been the place where the ark rested" (p. 125).

Coffman also quoted the Jewish historian Josephus, who gave this general thought on where the ark rested.

"The ark rested on the top of a certain mountain in Armenia" (IBID).

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

"And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen." (ASV)

"And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen." (NKJV)

On a time-line graph, this would be another mark indicating the length of these events. The time Noah entered the ark until the time the waters went down enough to see the tops of the mountains has been approximately seven and one half months.

Leupold says that the original here indicates a rapid decreasing of the waters of the flood as they left the earth (p. 313). The result of the continuing decrease of the waters would naturally be that the tops of the mountains would be seen.

Gen. 8:6-12 "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And

the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more."

> "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more." (ASV)
>
> "So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore." (NKJV)

The raven had strong wings and flew to and fro. The raven was also a bird which could rest on floating objects. On the other hand, the dove seems to have needed something more substantial than that. When the dove was sent out the first time (possibly seven days after the raven), it found no place where it could alight and rest, so it returned to the ark. Seven days later it was sent out again and this time returned with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. But it apparently still did not have a place to rest the sole of its foot.

There is another difference between the raven and the dove which should be noticed. The raven is not as particular as the dove is with regard to what it eats. Ravens were classified as unclean birds because they ate carrion (dead and putrefying flesh). The raven could survive outside of the ark. On the other hand, the dove was classified as a clean bird — it did not eat carrion. Therefore, when it was first released, it could not survive (for it had no food to eat).

Note the detail that the leaf had been plucked off. This was not a leaf which was found floating or lying upon the ground; it had been plucked by the dove from a tree. Here again is a wonderful manifestation of the power of GOD. Anyone who has ever seen a tree which has been submerged for over seven months knows it does not have fresh leaves upon it. Yet, GOD either maintained the trees, bushes, et cetera, during the length of the flood, or else He placed fully-grown new trees on the face of the earth. Whichever the case, it was a mighty miracle and manifestation of His power.

Imagine with this writer how Noah and his family must have longed to leave the ark and put their feet on dry ground again, to look all around them at the things of the earth. This writer remembers vividly the desire to see the "green, green, grass of home" while stationed in Vietnam. It is simply human nature to desire to see familiar things.

Gen. 8:13-16 "And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And GOD spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee."

> "And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry. And GOD spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee." (ASV)

> "And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. Then GOD spoke to Noah, saying, Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you." (NKJV)

Between verses thirteen and fourteen is a period of one month and twenty-seven days. By comparing chapter seven verse eleven with the present text, one learns that Noah was on the ark one year and ten days (Morris believes it was one year and seventeen days.). One does not know whether Noah's years were lunar or solar.

GOD told Noah when to enter the ark, and Noah waited for GOD to tell him when to leave. This is the trust and faith Noah had in GOD. He trusted GOD to tell him when

to enter the ark of safety, and when it was safe to leave the ark. Remember — Noah walked with GOD. He did not do things the way he thought they should be done, but rather waited upon GOD to direct his steps. Considering this, did Noah decide when to remove the covering of the ark?

Gen. 8:17-19 "Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark."

> "Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both birds, and cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatsoever moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark." (ASV)
>
> "Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth. So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark." (NKJV)

These verses simply tell of GOD's instruction for man and all the animals to leave the ark — so they did.

Gen. 8:20-22 "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

> "And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (ASV)
>
> "Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean

animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease." (NKJV)

This is the first time one sees the word "altar" used in the Bible. In verse twenty, Noah showed his gratitude and thanksgiving to GOD. He did so by taking some of every clean animal and offering them as sacrifices to GOD. Consider — when GOD told Noah to take seven pairs of the clean animals on the ark, did He anticipate the sacrifice Noah would make?

"God's smelling the 'sweet savor' of Noah's magnificent sacrifice is merely an anthropomorphism to describe God's acceptance and approval of it" (Coffman, p. 129).

Anthropomorphism — *"An interpretation of what is not human or personal in terms of human or personal"* (Webster).

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to GOD for a sweetsmelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2).

Consider that Noah's obedience to GOD plus his sacrifices of the best that already belonged to GOD caused GOD to accept his prayers. This same thing makes GOD willing to accept man's prayers today.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

Some have looked at these verses and said that GOD is never going to destroy the <u>earth</u> again. But a key phrase is overlooked by those who so think. **"WHILE THE EARTH REMAINETH."** As long as the earth exists, GOD will not destroy mankind as He did at the time of the flood. But the Bible clearly shows He will at some point destroy everything which is physical.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and

hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Peter 3:9-12)?

The phrase "While the earth remaineth" is *"as yet all the days of the earth"* in the Hebrew. This is the first indication in the Bible that the earth is not going to last forever and ever.

GOD would never destroy the earth in the same way He had just done. If the flood were only a local flood, has GOD kept His word? To ask is to answer. Floods have continued down through the ages, many times with great loss of life and damage to the land. GOD did not say there would not be any more floods, but rather there would never be another one which covered the entire world as this one had.

"the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" These words have often been used by Calvinists to try to bolster their false doctrine of one being born in sin, i.e., depraved from birth. First of all, the text **does not say** *"evil from the womb."*

"Youth" — neuriym —*"A masculine plural abstract noun. It refers to the early stages and years of a person's life and the experiences and characteristics of that time"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 739).

Interestingly, this original word is used in Proverbs 5:18 to speak of the wife of one's youth.

This writer cannot help but ask the following question: Was GOD referring to the infancy of mankind here? That is, that man had shown himself from a very early time to fill himself with evil thoughts. Or was He speaking of the fact that individual human beings as a whole begin considering evil thoughts at an early stage of their lives?

Genesis — Chapter Nine

Gen. 9:1-3 "And GOD blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

> "And GOD blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; With all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; As the green herb have I given you all." (ASV)

"replenish" — male — *"A verb meaning to fill, to be full, to be complete, to fulfill, to finish, to satsfy"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 612); *"To fill, accomplish. The verb generally denotes the completion of something that was unfinished or the filling of something that was empty"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"dread" — mora — *"A masculine noun meaning fear, terror, reverence. The primary concept underlying the meaning of this word is a sense of fear or awe that causes separation or brings respect"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 585).

One should compare what is found in this text with the instructions given to Adam in Genesis 1:28-29.

> "GOD blessed them, and GOD said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And GOD said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat."

The similarities are as follows: (1) GOD blessed both Adam and Eve and Noah and his family. (2) Both were told to be fruitful. (3) Both were told to multiply (reproduce). (4) Both were told what their food would be. (5) Both were told to fill the earth.

As noted above, the Hebrew word for our English word "replenish" (same word in Genesis one as the word in this text) indicates that they were to fill up that which was empty — fill it with human beings. It was GOD's intention to have the earth filled with human beings. One might ask, if this were the case, why did GOD not fill it by miracle in the first place? This seems to be the divine economy GOD often exercises. GOD does not do for man what man can do for

himself. GOD made mankind with the ability to reproduce himself, so He made the first pair and left it to mankind to do the rest.

One should also observe two striking differences in these passages. (1) In Genesis one, they were told to have dominion over the creatures on the earth, whereas in this chapter there was now to be a fear and dread of mankind on the part of the creatures of the earth. (2) In Genesis one, it was every "green herb" which was assigned to mankind for his food. In the present chapter, flesh is added to the green herbs as food for mankind.

There are those who suppose that man was eating flesh before this time, because sin had entered the picture. If he were, then he was doing it without faith, and since that which is not done in faith is sin — he was sinning. Further evidence of this is seen in that GOD had to tell Noah and his family that they were now to eat flesh. If they had been eating flesh, this would not have been necessary. This is much like the example of Peter (Acts 10 & 11). Peter was a Jew who strictly observed the dietary restrictions of the law of Moses. He refused to eat of all the food which appeared on the sheet. He had to be told by GOD that it was now all right to eat these foods before he would partake of them.

Something else which is interesting is the distinction made with regard to the animals. In Genesis 7:2, a distinction was made between clean and unclean creatures. Yet, in this text (v. 3), Noah is told, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." Noah was not told that he could eat only the clean animals, but that **every living thing** was at his disposal for food. In the Mosaic age, dietary restrictions were placed on GOD's people regarding clean and unclean things. But from this text, there does not seem to be any dietary restriction. Likewise today, Christians have only one dietary restriction — blood — the same restriction Noah had (v. 4, see Acts 15:19ff). It seems, in this context, that the distinction of clean and unclean was not for dietary purposes but rather for what could and could not be sacrificed.

Note also the word "dread" in the KJV. As noted above, the original word connotes fear and terror which separates man and animals. Further, add the concept that man is to rule over the animals — thus is superior to them. Evolutionists want man to consider himself as just another animal in a chain of animals. GOD shows in every area that a difference is to be made between animals and human beings.

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

> "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (ASV)

Why did GOD place a limitation on the eating of blood in each of the three dispensations of time? Some believe this was purely ceremonial, to prepare the people for the laws under the Mosaic dispensation. Crawford lists five possible reasons why GOD gave this prohibition.

> *"(a) the desire to guard against cruelty to animals; (b) the design to protect human life by demonstrating the inviolability which attaches in God's sight even to the lives of lower animals; (c) the intention to emphasize the sanctity of all life as God's most precious gift; (d) the design to point up the intimate connection between the blood and the life which subsists even in the animal world (cf. Lev. 17:10-13); (e) the design to emphasize especially its symbolic use in relation to atonement for sin (Heb. 9:22)"* (p. 135).

There can be no doubt from this text that there is a special significance between blood and life. There is a sacredness to life which needs to be recognized by all of mankind, even with regard to the life of animals. It has long been the practice of this author not only to give thanks to GOD at meal time for the food which GOD has given, but also when hunting and successfully harvesting an animal, to thank GOD for the food that particular animal will provide.

When one considers blood from a medical perspective, he realizes that it is through the blood that the nutrients and oxygen the body needs are transmitted throughout his body. This is especially critical for the brain, which controls the body. Since doctors tell one that the brain is the last thing to die, this then must be the seat of the soul.

One might ask, why was the blood forbidden for consumption after the flood but not before? The answer is found in that they were forbidden to eat flesh before the flood. One should study Genesis 1:29-30, where GOD designated the food they were to eat — they were vegetarians, as were **all of** the animals. That include T-rex.

Gen. 9:5-6 "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made He man."

> "And surely your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require; At the hand of every beast will I require it. And at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of GOD made He man." (ASV)

What is Murder? *"Murder is rightly defined as the taking of another man's life on one's authority and with malice aforethought"* (Crawford, p. 575).

The importance of these verses lies in the judicial implementation of capital punishment. As Coffman pointed out, when Cain killed his brother, he realized his crime was worthy of death. Thus, he told GOD he feared for his life when others came across him. GOD spared the life of Cain. But now GOD decreed that a murderer is to be punished by his fellow man by the forfeiture of his own life. The apostle Paul also upheld the right of governments to impose the death sentence on evil doers.

> "If I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die" (Acts 25:11, emphasis mine, RK).

It should be remembered that Paul spoke these words at the instruction of the Holy Spirit. Thus, GOD has decreed the death penalty for all murderers from the time of this text forward. Therefore, when man declares the death penalty to be immoral, he is contradicting GOD's word and stands condemned before Almighty GOD. Further, one should consider that the death penalty, when properly exercised, protects human life. If criminals realize that they will not lose their lives for murdering someone, What is to keep them from committing such a crime? This is evidenced by criminals in our own country who were sentenced to life in prison for murder, were later paroled, and then murdered another person. Ask Charles Manson if he were released if he would murder again if he felt like it. The death penalty, is given for the welfare of man and not vengeance. Vengeance belongs to GOD and in commanding the death penalty GOD is exercising His vengeance for the murder of one created in His image. Refusal to enact the death penalty for murder is rebellion to GOD!

Note the reason why murder of a human being is not allowed. Man alone was created in the image of GOD. Man could now kill animals for food, but the animal which killed a man would be held accountable for killing him. Here is another statement which shows the superiority of man over animals, contrary to the radical animal rights people's assertion that animals are equal to man (some even blaspheme the GOD of Heaven by saying they are better than man).

Why was the blood of an animal not seen to be sacred in the eyes of GOD? Could it be that it was because its blood was to be used as a substitution for man's life on the altar? Further, that blood was to be used in view of the exceedingly precious blood of the Savior which would be offered for the sins of man. Another consideration would seem to be that this further taught man the preciousness of life itself, if even the blood of animals was precious to

GOD. A principle this writer sees here is the preciousness of ALL life in the eyes of GOD, but especially that of human beings.

Who is to exercise the death penalty upon a murderer? "every man's brother" This may have given rise to the practice of the goel, the "avenger of blood." But when one considers the totality of the Scriptures, it would appear to this author that it makes the responsibility for execution of a murderer to be that of society itself. Do not the Scriptures teach that all men are our brothers? There must be a rule of law, or otherwise anarchy exists. When anarchy exists, then man does whatever he can get away with, and cruelty abounds.

> *"When lawgivers attempt to tamper with this regulation, they are trying to be wiser than the Divine Lawgiver and overthrow the pillars of safety that He Himself provided for the welfare of mankind"* (Leupold, p. 334).

> "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of GOD to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of GOD, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:3-4).

What is the purpose of a sword? To take or defend life. Capital punishment both takes a life and defends the public from violence.

> *"Right here is also the explanation for two different words in the Hebrew scriptures for killing. They are ratsach which means murder, and harag which means put to death. Ratsach is in the Decalogue, 'Thou shalt not kill;' and the other is in Deuteronomy 13:9; 'Thou shalt surely kill (harag) him,' referring to a legal execution"* (Coffman, p. 137).

A legal execution is not murder — it is the exercise of GOD's vengeance for breaking His law through his agents hand's — man.

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

> "And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein." (ASV)

Here is a repetition of what one finds in verse one, which emphasizes GOD's command to reproduce.

Gen. 9:8-13 "And GOD spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish My covenant

with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And GOD said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth."

> "And GOD spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you. Of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And GOD said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." (ASV)

> "Then GOD spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. And GOD said: This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth." (NKJV)

"covenant" — berith — *"A feminine noun meaning covenant, treaty, alliance, agreement"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 165); *"Determination, stipulation, covenant...It was a treaty, alliance of friendship, a pledge, an obligation between a monarch and his subjects, a constitution. It was a contract which was accompanied by signs, sacrifices and a solemn oath which sealed the relationship with promises of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience"* (Zodhiates, CD).

GOD set forth a covenant, i.e., He dictated the terms of the covenant, as only He could do regarding this situation. GOD made the unconditional promise that the world would never again be destroyed by water. Never again would anyone see what Noah and his family saw. This is not a promise that there would never be another flood which would take human life or even destroy large amounts of property. It was a promise that the whole world would never be destroyed by water. Further, this is not a promise

that the world would never be destroyed, for He has promised that a time will come when it shall be totally destroyed.

> "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Peter 3:9-12)?

As noted above in the definition of the word "covenant," this covenant was sealed with a sign. The sign that GOD would never do this again was the rainbow. Some have questioned whether the rainbow existed before the flood. It is suggested that one should remember that this world was drastically changed during the flood. The whole atmosphere was changed from a planet which was watered by a mist from the earth (Genesis 2:6), to one which was watered by a process of evaporation and condensation. There was no need for a rainbow before this time, and probably the right atmospheric conditions did not even exist for a rainbow. Further, GOD said He would "set My bow in the cloud." The root word for "set" (nathan) pertains to giving, i.e., GOD is giving them a sign which indicates it was something never before seen or done. If there had been a rainbow before the flood, how could a rainbow be a sign of comfort after the flood?

Gen. 9:14-17 "And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between GOD and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And GOD said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

> "And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and

I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between GOD and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And GOD said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth." (ASV)

It would be easy in this section to miss the fact that GOD said "when I bring a cloud over the earth." It is GOD who controls nature — **not** "mother nature." The term "mother nature" is a euphemism for "mother earth" and represents fertility goddesses. It is GOD who provided the laws of nature and all life owes itself to Him — not the mythical "mother earth."

One can only imagine the terror which would have come upon those who lived after the flood every time clouds began to gather if GOD had not made this everlasting covenant. Everyone would believe the world was about to come to an end. Yet, under the new order of atmospheric conditions, clouds are necessary to water the earth.

One of the curious things about this section is for whom the reminder of this covenant was made. Yes, it would cause man to remember the promise GOD had made about a world-wide flood. But note — it was also a reminder to GOD that He would not so destroy the earth in this manner again. Can GOD forget? No, because if He could, then He would not be GOD. What is the explanation? Could it be that this is said as a reassurance to man? Further, it appears that when the clouds gather, man does not always see a rainbow. But that does not mean there is not one. The text seems to indicate that there is always a rainbow and that GOD can see it.

Gen. 9:18-19 "And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread."

"And the sons of Noah, that went forth from the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah: and of these was the whole earth overspread." (ASV)

There are a couple of things one should notice in these two verses. (1) One is told that Canaan was Ham's son. This is important in order to get the connection to what happens and is predicted in the next few verses regarding the sin of Noah and his son's sin. (2) The population of the world since the time of the flood is the result of the sons of Noah and their wives. There is an implication here that Noah and his wife did not have any more children. Today, all human beings have descended from these three sons — Shem, Ham, or Japheth. It should be kept in mind that, though all human beings have descended from these three

pairs, the context of this book is going to narrow to the descendants of Shem. Why? Because the lineage of Shem will lead directly to Abraham, and from Abraham to the Son of GOD — Jesus the Christ, the Messiah and Savior of the faithful. It will be the descendants of Abraham which will conquer the descendants of Ham.

One of the things which should probably be kept in mind here is when this account was written. Moses probably wrote this while the Israelites were on their way to conquer Canaan. The Canaanites had become extremely wicked, and this wickedness seems to have been a family trait (as introduced in this context and in the actions of Ham). As one writer suggested, this may have been an encouragement in showing Israel that these people were meant to serve them by GOD's decree because of their sins.

Some have thought that the origin of the races is found in the events chronicled here. They attempt to attributed the black race to Ham. While it must be true that all the genetic markers were found in these three pairs, there is no indication that they were of different colors. Remember — they were all the sons of Noah and his wife, and while slight differences in skin color may exist in a family, they are only slight. It is this author's opinion that the races developed after the events of the tower of Babel and the people's being scattered all over the world. At the same time, it may be that this was the beginning of gradual changes of pigmentations in skin. What should be remembered and reflected upon is that all human beings are descendants of one original pair, and after the flood from three pairs of human beings. Therefore, the color of one's skin should not be an issue. The issue should be how does one live – by the laws GOD has set, or in rebellion to His laws.

There is little doubt that the development of nations is forecast. This development is highlighted in the next chapter, with a clear distinction occurring after the tower of Babel.

Gen. 9:20-23 "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness."

> "And Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken. And he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both

their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness." (ASV)

"nakedness" — erwah — *"A feminine noun expressing nakedness...one finds a common euphemism for sexual relations — to uncover one's nakedness (Lev. 18:6; 20:17)"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 870); *"It means nudity, nakedness, bareness; the genitals; shame, disgrace, blemish, defect; a shameful thing, a foul thing, ignominy; filthiness, uncleanness, excrement"* (Zodhiates, CD).

The great faith and righteousness of Noah has been seen, but here one is reminded that he was not perfect. GOD shows the "warts" of His people along with their strengths. Noah becomes a farmer, grows a vineyard, and becomes intoxicated. In his drunken state he became nude in his tent, and (from the text) it appears he passed out. Ham saw him in this condition and told his brothers what he had seen. They took a covering (garment) and put it on their father in such a way so as not to see his condition.

The events here are somewhat vague. One is given some of the details but is left wondering about what happened. One can know that something was done, either to Noah or by Noah — this was not simply a matter of Ham's seeing his father nude. The curse placed upon Canaan is ample proof of this assertion. Such a curse would not have been placed upon one for simply seeing the nudity of another.

Gen. 9:24-27 "And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. GOD shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the GOD of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. GOD enlarge Japheth, And let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant." (ASV)

"done" — asah — *"A verb meaning to do, to make, to accomplish, to complete. This frequently used Hebrew verb conveys the central notion of performing an activity with a distinct purpose, a moral obligation, or a goal in view...Provocatively, the word appears twice in Ezekiel to imply the intimate action or caressing or fondling the female breast (Ezekiel 23:3, 8)"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 876); *"This important root means to work, labor, toil; to make, create,*

construct, build; to accomplish; to acquire, earn, procure; to prepare; to offer, sacrifice; to appoint; to constitute; to keep; to fulfill; to happen; to be; to handle; to squeeze. The basic meaning of aMsaMh is 'do' or 'make' in a general sense" (Zodhiates, CD).

When did the utterances of this section take place? Did Noah pronounce this curse and blessing immediately after he awoke? Or were they pronounced shortly before his death, as was customary during those times?

One of the important questions to be answered in this text, is Why is Canaan cursed if Ham is the guilty party? Again, it is pointed out that one does not have all of the details of these events. There is a great deal of speculation about what happened here, but there are some things that are known. (1) Noah got drunk (intoxicated). (2) Noah was nude in his tent. (3) Ham saw his father's condition and reported it to his brothers. (4) Shem and Japheth covered their father's nakedness. (5) Noah awoke and knew something had been done to him. (6) Canaan is cursed because of these events. Mosher made the following comments on the cursing of Canaan.

> *"Why Canaan was cursed has brought much speculation. Some assert that since Ham was Noah's youngest son thus Noah cursed Ham's youngest (Delitzsch). Others argue that Canaan actually perpetuated the crime on his grandfather Noah (Talmud, Ibn Ezra). A few seem to think that the curse on future generations evinced the enormity of the sin (Calvin). Some think Canaan was already walking in his father's ways (Keil), or others that Noah, as a prophet, foresaw that the Canaanites would deserve to be slaves (Lange). Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in all the reasons (?)"* (The Book of Genesis, MSOP Lectureship, 2001, p. 177).

This account raises a couple of questions. (1) If Ham were the one who did something to his father why was not Ham cursed? (2) If Ham were the guilty party, why was only Canaan singled out for future servitude?

In considering all of this, it should be remembered that the word "son" can refer to any male relative. Thus, here it could refer to Canaan, who was Noah's grandson. This raises a question, since it was the descendants of Canaan which are cursed and not any of the other descendants of Ham. Could it be that Canaan was the guilty party and Ham simply reported what had happened to his brothers? Or could it be that both were involved in what had been done on this occasion? It seems impossible to this writer, considering Ezekiel 18:20, that Canaan was not involved in some way in this incident. GOD does not punish the guiltless!

Also, Where is the passage which shows Ham to be the youngest son of Noah? In every passage where the sons are listed, Ham is always listed as the second son, unless it is this passage.

The descendants of Canaan were cursed with being the servants of the descendants of Shem and Japheth. In noticing the blessing placed on Shem and Japheth, it is observed that it was through the descendants of Shem that Messiah would come.

Gen. 9:28-29 "And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died."

> "And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: And he died." (ASV)

Noah's age is given as nine hundred and fifty years. Of all of the men in the Bible, he is the second oldest recorded human being to live on the earth. An illustrious man of faith has passed from the scene, yet being dead he still teaches great lessons on continued faithfulness in the face of a world so evil that GOD had decided to destroy it. Was this man perfect in the sense of absolute perfection? No! But he was faithful to GOD, as the heros of faith chapter of Hebrews testifies.

> "By faith Noah, being warned of GOD of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

Genesis — Chapter Ten

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

> "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, namely, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood." (ASV)

Here one finds a basic table of nations being presented through the ancestors of Noah's three sons. Seventy ancestors of Noah's sons are presented: thirty through Ham, twenty-six through Shem, and fourteen through Japheth.

Gen. 10:2-5 "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations."

> "The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. Of these were the isles of the nations divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations." (ASV)

> "The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations." (NKJV)

The sons and grandsons of Japheth are listed first. When one looks at verse five, he might draw the conclusion that this is where languages began and where people began dividing up into nations. As will be seen in the next chapter, that is not the case. This chapter looks ahead to the time when they will be divided by language, and from that division nations will evolve.

It is also stated that from the descendants of Japheth will come the people who inhabit the "isles of the Gentiles." The word "isles" comes from the Hebrew iy, *"a masculine noun meaning island or coastland...In general, the islands, shores, and coastlands of the Mediterranean Sea are indicated"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 41). JFB states that this term was used to describe nations which were accessible from the sea. From these people will eventually come the world powers of Greece and Rome. Basically, the

homelands of the descendants of Japheth were Europe and Asia Minor, with some going as far as India. From this it can be seen that Americans, by-and-large come from the family of Japheth.

Gen. 10:6-20 "And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations."

> "And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Jehovah: wherefore it is said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land he went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and Rehoboth-ir, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (the same is the great city). And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim (whence went forth the Philistines), and Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanite spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanite was from Sidon, as thou goest toward Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, unto Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations." (ASV)

One of the people mentioned who is particularly noteworthy is Nimrod. Nimrod's name is believed to be associated with *"rebel."* Morris believes his name means *"let us rebel"* (p. 251). Leupold says his name means *"let us revolt"* (p. 366). What the text is telling one is that Nimrod was the beginning of some mighty empires. It is probable that be actually began power bases which evolved into these mighty nations. From Nimrod came the nations of Assyria and Babylon (*"confusion,"* Leupold, p. 368). The Assyrians were particularly strong and long-time enemies of GOD's people, bringing them much heartache over the years. This is modern-day Syria. Babylon is modern-day Iraq. In looking through the list of descendants of Ham, it appears that they were and are basically trouble-makers. It should be noted that Nimrod is associated with Babel, the place where rebellion to GOD after the flood began. The people built a tower meant to reach Heaven. It appears that it was Nimrod who first tried to establish a one-world government. It will be obvious that such will never happen, because GOD will not let it happen.

> *"Eastern tradition has painted Nimrod as a gigantic oppressor of the peoples' liberties and an impius rebel against Divine authority. Josephus credited him with having instigated the building of the tower of Babel"* (Coffman, p. 149).

Another name which also stands out is Canaan. From his descendants came the Hivites, Jebusites, Amorites, et cetera. These names are familiar to Bible students in that they were the nations listed which the Israelites were to conquer in the promised land. From the genealogy of Canaan, it can be seen why these nations were lumped together by simply referring to them as Canaanites. This would all take place as Noah predicted.

Gen. 10:21-32 "Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east. These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the

nations divided in the earth after the flood."

> "And unto Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, to him also were children born. The sons of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arpachshad, and Lud, and Aram. And the sons of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. And Arpachshad begat Shelah; and Shelah begat Eber. And unto Eber were born two sons: The name of the one was Peleg. For in his days was the earth divided. And his brother's name was Joktan. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." (ASV)

"the brother of Japheth the elder" It is disputed as to whether this means that Shem was the older brother or whether Japheth was the older. It is from Shem that the Semitic tribes, i.e., nations came.

In naming the children of Shem, the one which is most important is Arphaxad. When one turns to Luke 3:36, he learns that it was through Arphaxad that the Messianic lineage came.

Another name which stands out is "Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided." Morris states that his name means *"division."* It appears that it was during Peleg's life when the events of the tower of Babel occurred.

> *"According to the Hebrew chronology, this authoritative distribution took place about a century after the deluge, most probably at the birth of Peleg, and his name was a memorial of that event"* (JFB, p. 118).

This would indicate that the division of languages and geographical nations was accomplished in the fifth generation from the flood.

> *"If it is ever actually proved that the earth once was a single land mass that somehow split apart, with the segments gradually drifting away to form the present continents, then indeed this verse might be understood to refer to such an event. At present, the question of continental drift is still open among scientists; and creationist scientists have pointed to a number of unresolved physical difficulties with the whole idea"* (Morris, p. 261).

Genesis Chapter Eleven

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

"And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." (ASV)

The whole earth spoke the same language (*"all had the same vocabulary," Leupold, p. 383*).

"one" — ehad — *"A numerical adjective meaning one, first, once, the same"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 33).

One should also note the word "language" from saphah, which means *"a lip"* (Zodhiates, CD). Keil-Delitzsch translate this verse as, *"The whole earth was one lip and one kind of words"* (p. 172).

What a blessing it would be, when one travels to a foreign nation to preach the Gospel, if he did not have to learn another language or have to use interpreters. Any time there is a translation from one language to another, there are difficulties in expressing the meaning conveyed in the first to the second language. On the other hand, it would also be easier to spread false doctrine and to rebel against GOD, as demonstrated in the building of the tower of Babel.

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

"And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there." (ASV)

The word "east" should be noted here. The word can mean a pure compass direction, or it can also mean eastward. In context, it appears that they were moving from where the ark settled, i.e., the mountains of Ararat. They found a place called Shinar in which they settled. Since Shinar, the place where Babel is, is to the southeast of these mountains, then it would appear that eastward would be the proper translation here. The ASV shows that they "journeyed east." The same word translated in the KJV as "from the east" in the present verse is translated "journeyed east" in chapter thirteen, verse eleven.

The notion that they "dwelt there" seems to indicate that this became the center of all the people who spoke one language — the whole population of the world.

Gen. 11:3 "And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter."

"And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar." (ASV)

"burn" — sarap — *"A verb meaning to burn. Most often, this word is used to mean to burn with intent, to destroy, or to consume...Less frequently, this word refers to the process of firing bricks"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1201); *"To be on fire, burn; to absorb with fire; to destroy by fire; to consume; to be burnt, to kindle; to set on fire, to cremate; to bake"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Who said "one to another?" Those who spoke one language — all people. All of the people were involved in this project. What did they have for building materials? Bricks can be made from many materials and have traditionally been used for building things, paving roads, and adornment. Some bricks have been made with materials which were sun-dried. It is this author's belief that the material used in the bricks of this context was probably clay. His belief is based upon the fact that they were to be throughly burned. These burned bricks were to act as "stone" for their purposes.

What binding material did they use? "slime" — hemar — *"A masculine noun referring to slime, tar, pitch, bitumen, asphalt"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 352).

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

> "And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." (ASV)

The first thing noticed by this author about this verse is the use of six pronouns. All plural, all referring to human beings — NONE referring to GOD.

Why did they wish to build a city and a tower? A city is for the habitation of large numbers of people, and the tower would obviously serve as a focal point (rallying point). Was this done to honor GOD? No, it was done to make a name for themselves, to give themselves some kind of fame. This would seem to indicate the idea of *"Let us show how great we are by accomplishing such a thing"* — pride had reared its ugly head.

> "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

Their pride would indeed lead to the fall of all their plans. Man's pride always leads to a fall.

This whole project was done in defiance of GOD. When Noah and his family came forth from the ark, GOD told them their job was to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" — not to only replenish (fill) a part of

the earth. They wanted to build to keep from filling the earth — to stay in one place.

There have been those who have speculated that the tower's purpose was to enable them to get closer to GOD if a disaster with the magnitude of a flood ever came upon them again. There is nothing in the text which indicates this. Further, if such had been the purpose, it would simply have shown their lack of faith and trust in GOD — another sin. He had promised not to destroy the earth with water again. They were determined to unite around a man-made object instead of uniting in faith around GOD and His purpose for man. Others have speculated that the tower was to be either an object of worship or in some way used for worship. Again there is nothing in the text which would indicate the tower was built for this purpose. Other speculations have been built around Chaldean mythology regarding giants who waged war against the mythological gods. All of these speculations are shown to be just that — speculations, because their intent is shown in the latter part of this verse.

This writer would like to consider one other speculation. Because the much later Babylonians called larger towers of great height ziggurates and used them for purposes of pagan worship does not mean the descendants of Noah did so at this early date, or did not do so. Again, nothing indicates such use in this text. GOD says their purpose was to make a name for themselves and keep themselves from being scattered over the earth.

Gen. 11:5-6 "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do."

> "And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do: and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do." (ASV)

The first thing to remember here is the rebellion of man against GOD's directive to fill the earth. In essence, by rebelling against GOD, they had gone to war with GOD. Thus, they needed to be shown that they could not win against Him.

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower" Was coming down to see these things a use of anthropomorphism ("ascribing human characteristics to nonhuman things" — Webster, CD), or did GOD actually make an appearance as He did with Abraham in Genesis 18? The key thing to notice here, no matter which of the

two this is, is that GOD is intervening in this matter. They will not be allowed to continue the building, and they will do what He said regarding filling the earth – not just one place. This reminds this writer of the events found in Acts 8:1-4, where a persecution came upon Christians which scattered them throughout the world. Christ had told them that they were to carry the Gospel into all the world, beginning at Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and the then the whole world (Acts 1:8). They did not accomplish His purpose until a persecution drove them to various parts of the earth where they "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

"the people is one, and they have all one language" GOD showed that they were united because they had one language. Because of one language, they could work efficiently together on any project they might choose. If they could imagine something, they would be able to work toward it and possibly attain their goal within reason. Since this ability was presently channeled into rebellion against Him, and since it appears they all joined this effort, GOD made it difficult for them to communicate. By causing this separation, if one goes bad, it does not follow that all will follow suit. What lesson can be learned by the church with regard to what happened here? Why did GOD not ordain a worldly headquarters for the church? If headquarters went wrong, would not that have influenced and possibly caused all congregations to follow suit? GOD desires all His people to speak the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:10). **But not if it is error.** The independence of each congregation, ruled by its own elders, guarantees that if some (or even the majority) accept and practice false doctrine — a remnant will be left.

"now nothing will be restrained from them" *"They will shrink from nothing, however hard or presumptuous, which they may wish to accomplish"* (JFB, p. 123).

Regarding their unity and the relationship of language, consider these words of Keil-Delitzsch.

> *"If language is the audible expression of emotions, conceptions, and thoughts of the mind, the cause of the confusion or division of the one human language into different national dialects must be sought in an effect produced upon the human mind, by which the original unity of emotion, conception, thought, and will was broken up"* (p. 174).
>
> *"As long as people are united in their aims and works they are encouraged to succeed...unity will accomplish what cannot be accomplished otherwise"* (Zerr, p. 18).

Gen. 11:7-8 "Go to, let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's

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

> "Come, let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city." (ASV)

"confound" — balal — *"A verb meaning to mix, to mingle, to tangle, to confuse, to bewilder, to perplex, to anoint"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 141).

"language" — saphah — *"Lips"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"let Us" This phrase reminds one of Genesis 1:26, where GOD said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." This was the gathering of the GODHEAD which discussed what would be done. There was perfect unity in creating man in Their image, just as there was now perfect unity in scattering them upon the face of the earth by confusing their languages. What did GOD do to stop the building of this city and the tower of pride? He mixed up, tangled and confused their lips.

As this writer studied these verses, he could not help but think about the efforts of people today. Many are striving to have a one-world government, all under the same laws, and he would assume eventually one language. Folks, it will never happen. GOD did not want such then, and it is this writer's belief that He does not want such ever in this world. Why? For the evil to which it can lead. There is enough evil today without making it easier to spread such. Further, does this not shed light on how "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5)?

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

> "Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did Jehovah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." (ASV)

"babel" — babel — *"A proper noun designating Babel or Babylon, a name meaning 'confusion' and the name of the foreign power most often mention in the Old Testament, Babylon"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 117).

Babel, which came to be known as Babylon, is a constant reminder to man of the existence of GOD. See "confound" above.

Gen. 11:10-11 "These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood: And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "These are the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old, and begat Arpachshad two years after the flood. and Shem lived after he begat Arpachshad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

It appears that the starting age here was how old Shem was at the age the flood ended. Shem was one hundred and two years old when Arphaxad was born, and he lived a total of six hundred and two years.

Gen. 11:12-13 "And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah: And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Arpachshad lived five and thirty years, and begat Shelah. and Arpachshad lived after he begat Shelah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Arphaxad was thirty-five years old when Salah was born, and he lived a total of four hundred and thirty-eight years.

Gen. 11:14-15 "And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Shelah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: and Shelah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Salah was thirty years old when Eber was born, and he lived a total of four hundred and thirty-three years.

Gen. 11:16-17 "And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Eber was thirty-four years old when Peleg was born, and he lived a total of four hundred and sixty-four years.

Gen. 11:18-19 "And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: and Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Peleg was thirty years old when Reu was born, and he

lived a total of two hundred and thirty-nine years.

Gen. 11:20-21 "And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Reu was thirty-two years old when Serug was born, and he lived a total of two hundred and thirty-nine years.

Gen. 11:22-23 "And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: and Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Serug was thirty years old when Nahor was born, and he lived a total of two hundred and thirty years.

Gen. 11:24-25 "And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters."

> "And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: and Nahor lived after he begat Terah a hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters." (ASV)

Nahor was twenty-nine years old when Terah was born, and he lived a total of one hundred and forty-eight years.

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

> "And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran." (ASV)y years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran." (NKJV)

At age seventy, Terah has three sons — Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Of these Abram is the most important.

Gen. 11:27-28 "Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees."

> "Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees." (ASV)

Several bits of information are given which relate to the future. (1) There are three brothers. (2) Haran had a son named Lot. (3) Haran died before Terah. (4) Their native

land was "Ur of the Chaldees."

One of the things which should be noted is that Terah and Nahor (Nachor) were idolaters (Joshua 24:2). The question might be asked, Was Abram also an idolater? In studying the context, especially that of the next chapter, it would seem that he was not. Another possibility is that GOD called him out of idolatry, possibly like Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus being called out of the false religion of Judaism. If so, then it shows that his heart was such that when he was shown the truth, he stopped serving idols to serve GOD with all of his heart.

"Ur of the Chaldees" — *"light, or the moon city, a city 'of the Chaldees,' the birthplace of Haran (Gen. 11:28,31), the largest city of Shinar or northern Chaldea, and the principal commercial centre of the country as well as the centre of political power. It stood near the mouth of the Euphrates, on its western bank, and is represented by the mounds (of bricks cemented by bitumen) of el-Mugheir, i.e., 'the bitumined,' or 'the town of bitumen,' now 150 miles from the sea and some 6 miles from the Euphrates, a little above the point where it receives the Shat el-Hie, an affluent from the Tigris. It was formerly a maritime city, as the waters of the Persian Gulf reached thus far inland. Ur was the port of Babylonia, whence trade was carried on with the dwellers on the gulf, and with the distant countries of India, Ethiopia, and Egypt. It was abandoned about B.C. 500, but long continued, like Erech, to be a great sacred cemetery city, as is evident from the number of tombs found there.*

The oldest king of Ur known to us is Ur-Ba'u (servant of the goddess Ba'u), as Hommel reads the name, or Ur-Gur, as others read it. He lived some twenty-eight hundred years B.C., and took part in building the famous temple of the moon-god Sin in Ur itself. The illustration here given represents his cuneiform inscription, written in the Sumerian language, and stamped upon every brick of the temple in Ur. It reads: 'Ur-Ba'u, king of Ur, who built the temple of the moon-god.'

Ur was consecrated to the worship of Sin, the Babylonian moon-god. It shared this honour, however, with another city, and this city was Haran, or Harran. Harran was in Mesopotamia, and took its name from the highroad which led through it from the east to the west. The name is Babylonian, and bears witness to its having been founded by a Babylonian king. The same witness is still more decisively borne by the worship paid in it to the Babylonian moon-god and by its ancient temple of Sin. Indeed, the temple of the moon-god at Harran was perhaps even more famous in the Assyrian and Babylonian world than the temple of the moon-god at Ur.

Between Ur and Harran there must, consequently, have

been a close connection in early times, the record of which has not yet been recovered. It may be that Harran owed its foundation to a king of Ur; at any rate the two cities were bound together by the worship of the same deity, the closest and most enduring bond of union that existed in the ancient world. That Terah should have migrated from Ur to Harran, therefore, ceases to be extraordinary. If he left Ur at all, it was the most natural place to which to go. It was like passing from one court of a temple into another.

Such a remarkable coincidence between the Biblical narrative and the evidence of archaeological research cannot be the result of chance. The narrative must be historical; no writer of late date, even if he were a Babylonian, could have invented a story so exactly in accordance with what we now know to have been the truth. For a story of the kind to have been the invention of Palestinian tradition is equally impossible. To the unprejudiced mind there is no escape from the conclusion that the history of the migration of Terah from Ur to Harran is founded on fact (Sayce)" (Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary, CD).

"Homes in Ur of the Chaldees were very impressive. They contained several rooms, including servants' quarters, a kitchen, guest rooms and a private chapel at the rear of the house. Many of the houses had two floors. The lower floor was often used for keeping animals. It was not unusual for an average middle class house to contain from ten to twenty rooms. The homes and other remains from Ur give evidence of great affluence.

Archaeologists also found evidence that education was quite advanced. The students learned to write in cuneiform characters by imitating what their school masters had written on clay tablets. The students were taught multiplication and division tables. They were exposed to square and cube roots. After one has examined the materials provided by archaeologists, he becomes aware of the fact that Abraham's home town was not composed of ignorant primitive tribesmen from some faraway 'never-never' land; they were apparently intelligent, prosperous, and literary-minded" (Winford Claiborne, The Book of Genesis, p. 156).

Gen. 11:29-30 "And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child."

> "And Abram and Nahor took them wives: The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. And Sarai was barren; She had no child." (ASV)

Here one sees the marriages of Abram and Nahor. Abram married his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). Nahor married his brother's (Haran) daughter — Milcah. Haran was also the father of Iscah, who most believe was a daughter, but who is not mentioned again in the Scriptures. Some want to believe that Iscah and Sarai are the same person. But again, Sarai was Abram's half-sister, while Milcah was Haran's daughter.

An additional note is given which will set the stage for what happens later with regard to the birth of Isaac. Morris believes that Sarai was barren so that the child of promise would be born in the promised land. "Barren" is the idea of being *"sterile."*

A number of women are mentioned in one verse when so few are named before this time. The following history and the marriage's importance to the lineage of Christ show why the women were mentioned.

Gen. 11:31 "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran."

> "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." (ASV)

The call of Abraham by GOD and the record by the Holy Spirit is given for consideration. This was done because the present text seems to indicate that it was Terah's decision to move to Haran ("Charran").

> "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The GOD of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell" (Acts 7:2-4).

It was Abram's decision to make this move based on GOD's command — not Terah's.

One of the questions this writer has is this: Did the "city" of Haran exist before they journeyed there, or was it built after they reached this place and named in honor of the departed son and brother?

Genesis — Chapter Twelve

Gen. 12:1-3 “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I

will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

> "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make they name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (ASV)

The first thing noticed is that GOD calls for Abram to do something. When one looks a little further, he notices that Abram must sacrifice something to obey GOD. Sometimes the sacrifices necessary to obey GOD are monumental, and at other times they are relatively small. But all are necessary to serve GOD faithfully. From a human perspective, for Abram it took great faith, for the sacrifices demanded of him are not minor. Leave a land which he had always known. Uproot his family to move to who knows where. Leave the rest of his family behind. In order to do this, he must deny himself of many familiar and pleasant things. Man tends to be a creature of habit, thus showing a desire for the familiar.

> "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).

GOD's servants must always be living sacrifices — willing to sacrifice anything and everything to follow Him.

> "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

> *"Abraham obeyed when he did not know <u>where</u> (Heb. 11:8-10), <u>how</u> (vv. 11-12), <u>when</u> (vv. 13-16), or <u>why</u> (vv. 17-19; and so should we"* (Wiersbe, <u>Be Obedient</u>, p. 16).

The first thing GOD told Abraham to do was to leave his country. It is disputed as to whether this refers to the call he received in Ur or a renewal of that call in Haran. This writer leans toward the call in Ur, because of the words "had said" and Acts 7:2-4. The important thing is that he was called to leave where he was without knowing where he was going.

Second, Abram was told to get away from his kindred. This writer has often told newly-weds that one of the best things they can do is move a long way from their parents. This allows them to learn better how to depend on each other without a lot of family interference. The pressures of relatives are very powerful, whether one wishes to think they are or not. In Abram's case, he was facing a family which worshipped idols, and their influence needed to be

negated. Blood has many times been proven to be thicker than truth and obedience to GOD. Notice particularly that Abram was told to get away from his father's house (family). Why? They were idolaters (Joshua 24:2).

Third, Abram was told that GOD would guide him to a land He has chosen. Too many times man decides where GOD will be pleased with Him. Take Lot's choice of land to occupy as an example of such. This was a promise, not simply to guide Abram to this land but to give it to him and the generations of his family (Genesis 12:6-7). If it were not so tragic, it would be extremely comical to note the attempts of man to declare that Abram's posterity never received the land GOD promised them. Did GOD give Abram's descendants the land He promised them? Let GOD answer that question.

> "I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers...And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD" (Exodus 6:4, 8).

> "And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:43-45, emphasis mine, RK). *Does "all" mean "all?"*

> "Thou art the LORD the GOD, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before Thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed Thy words; for Thou art righteous" (Nehemiah 9:7-8, emphasis mine, RK).

Fourth, a great nation would be made from the descendants of Abram. It should be remembered that at this point, Abram has no children, and his wife is barren (sterile).

Fifth, Abram will personally be blessed. When one looks ahead, he sees that Abram was blessed in many

different ways. He was not perfect and sinned from time to time. When he sinned, GOD punished him. When he obeyed, GOD blessed him, as He does all men.

Sixth, GOD would make Abram's name great. Truly his name has endured down through the ages as a great and honorable man. Note that among the Arab nations, he is considered a great prophet of GOD, not simply among the Jews and those who profess Christianity.

Seventh, "thou shalt be a blessing." The ASV renders this *"and be thou a blessing."* There is a split among scholars as to which of these is the correct understanding. *Consider this thought — could any true servant of GOD not be a blessing to those around him? If he is not a blessing to those around him, how could GOD bless him in the future through Messiah's coming from his lineage? "If Abram would do his part, then surely God would provide the power for him to be a blessing"* (Claiborne, p. 156). The traditional view is that this is a renewal of the promise to give mankind a Messiah.

Eighth, blessings and cursings were promised. *Who will be blessed?* Those who bless or treat Abram in the correct manner. *Who will be cursed?* Those who mistreat Abram. *Why will these two things be done to those who react to Abram?* Because Abram is GOD's faithful servant, and what is done to GOD's faithful servants is done to Him. Note this principle as seen in passages like Matthew 25:31-46 and Acts 9:1-5. Consider the life of Joseph, who acted as a blessing to all around him because he faithfully served GOD. His family (and consequently the Israelites as a whole) were blessed, Potiphar's house was blessed, the prison was blessed, the nation of Egypt was blessed, as well as the people who came to Egypt for food during the drought. Further, note the mid-wives who refused to carry out Pharaoh's orders to murder the baby boys when they were born. They were a blessing to the Israelites, and in turn GOD "made them houses" (Exodus 1:21). On the other hand, note the curse that Pharaoh and the Amalekites were to Israel, and see their destruction by GOD's hand.

Ninth, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Here is beyond all doubt a renewal of the promise first made to Adam and Eve — the promise of the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

> "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).

While it is true that the promise would come through the Jews, it was not for them to the exclusion of the rest of mankind. This was a promise which would benefit all men who react in faith (as did Abram) to GOD's commands.

Since the blessing enumerated here is clearly talking about the promise of Messiah, it is this writer's view that verse two should read *"be thou a blessing."*

Gen. 12:4-5 "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came."

> "So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (ASV)

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him" Two things to notice here: (1) GOD spoke to Abram, and (2) Abram did what GOD told him to do. Abram and his family were in Haran when GOD told him it was time to finish the journey. Here something is seen in Abram which should be copied by all men — **GOD spoke — Abram obeyed**. There does not seem to be any hesitation on his part, just as there was none when GOD told him to sacrifice his only son. The faith of Abram is outstanding.

> "*When a person hesitates at a command until he is able to see what he thinks is the propriety of the command, then even the carrying out of the command could not be justly an act of faith"* (Zerr, p. 20).

"and Lot went with him" After mention of Lot's father's dying (Haran), Lot's name seems to be linked with Abram's. It would seem possible that Lot was young when Haran died and that Abram may have taken him under his wing, thus becoming part of his house(hold).

Next, the age of Abram is given when he left Haran. Some have considered this to be a problem, since Terah died at the age of two hundred and five years. They say that Abram had to be older than seventy five because he left after Terah's death. They say Terah had sons beginning at age seventy, and Abram is listed first of the three sons mentioned, so Abram must have been the firstborn. Question: Was Abram listed first because of birth or because of importance? He is probably listed first because of his importance in the lineage of the coming Savior.

Verse five shows that Abram had become rich, gaining much substance. Further, all that he had gained went with him, nothing was left behind, and this included Lot and his

growing household. GOD called him away from the idolatrous land where his forefathers had lived in order to escape that influence. When one decides to stop following Satan, he can learn a lesson from this — do not leave anything behind. Further, one may have to leave old acquaintances behind and make new ones. They now make the final leg of their trip, an approximate four-hundred-mile journey. To get an idea of how long it would take to make such a journey then, let us assume that with all the flocks and herds, they would have averaged between two and three miles per hour. If they traveled eight hours a day, that would have been between sixteen and twenty-four miles per day, so let us consider approximately twenty miles per day. It would have taken them a minimum of twenty days to make such a trip. Today, you and I can travel that distance in our automobiles in approximately five and one-half hours. Their trip would probably have taken much longer than the twenty days allotted above, as the animals would have needed rest from time to time, plus other difficulties which may have slowed them down.

Gen. 12:6-7 "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, Who appeared unto him."

> "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, Who appeared unto him." (ASV)

Sichem (Shechem) sat in a valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The city was about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem. It was here that Jacob bought a piece of ground from Hamor that became the burying place of his descendants. This was also the place where Joshua gathered the Israelites to deliver his final address to them. Another important thing about this city was that it became one of the cities of refuge, which declared that GOD had given the land to the Israelites He had promised Abram. The city of Shechem will be seen numerous times as one studies the Bible.

The "plain of Moreh" has been interpreted as either a plain named Moreh or a plain which belonged to someone named Moreh. When Abram arrived in this land, it is recorded that it was already inhabited by the Canaanites, the seed of Canaan. It will be noted later that the term "Canaanite" encompasses two things: (1) A tribe of people called Canaan, or (2) all of the inhabitants of this land

(Hittites, Amorites, etc.).

Verse seven clarifies the promise to Abram. It was no longer **a** land which would be given to him, but rather it is **this** land. Abram's descendants would claim the land ("thy seed"). The promise was renewed to Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5) and later to Jacob (Genesis 28:3-4, 13-14). The promise was fulfilled to Abram's descendants — Israel (Joshua 21:43-45; 23:14-16; Nehemiah 9:7-8). It should also be noted here that the land promise was not an unconditional promise.

> "If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy GOD, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul...But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it" (Deuteronomy 30:10, 17-18).

Note what Joshua told Israel in his parting address.

> "When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your GOD, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which He hath given unto you" (Joshua 23:16).

GOD gave Abram the promise of this land, so *what does Abram do?* He builds an altar to the Lord. This is the proper reaction which any man ought to have toward GOD for the promises He has made to him — worship. GOD deserves man's absolute adoration for all He has done and will do for him. One of the characteristics of Abram, as he moved from place to place, was that he was an altar builder.

Gen. 12:8-9 "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south."

> "And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South." (ASV)

Here is an instance where something which happens

later is mentioned as if it already was. It is said that Abram moved to a mountain east of Bethel, but Bethel was not named until later by Jacob.

> "he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first" (Genesis 28:19).

The place Bethel was about seven miles north of Jerusalem. Hai [Ai — *"heap, ruin"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 827)] is thought to have been about two miles east of Bethel. What did Abram do when he got to Bethel? He built an altar – he worshipped GOD.

It is not known how long Abram stayed at the mountain by Bethel. It is known that at some point he continued his journey southward. The term "south" comes from negeb.

> *"A masculine noun meaning the South, south. It refers to the area around Beersheba and south of it...A proper noun, Negev, the southern district of Judah. It is used more specifically in contexts to indicate the area south of Judah"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 703).

Gen. 12:10 "And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land."

> "And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was sore in the land." (ASV)

"sojourn" — gur — *"A verb meaning to sojourn, to dwell as a foreigner; in the reflexive sense, to seek hospitality with"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 194); *"The basal definition is 'to turn aside (from the road)...This root verb essentially means to live among people who are not one's blood relatives. Though enjoying native civil rights, these people were dependent on available hospitality"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Famine can be caused by a number of different things. It may be that the normal rains cease, or it could come from a plague of locusts, or some other disaster. The book of Genesis tells of two other major famines in the land (Genesis 26:1; 41:56). Famines were apparently not that unusual in this land.

Some accuse Abram of not operating by faith when he went down to Egypt. They reason that GOD told him to go to Canaan and that He would take care of him. This author asks, How does one know that GOD did not tell him to go there? One should remember that it was Abram's seed which would inhabit the land. Further, is there any indication that GOD condemned Abram for going to Egypt? GOD did not condemn him for going to Egypt; He condemned him because of the lie he told which endangered Sarai.

One should also notice that Abram went to Egypt to "sojourn" there. The word "sojourn" points to a temporary situation (see above definitions). Abram did not intend to stay permanently in Egypt. Consider that later the descendants of Abram went to Egypt because of a severe famine. Would someone show this author where Jacob was commanded to go to Egypt with his family? Yet, one can see the providential hand of GOD in preserving the nation through their going to Egypt. Was the same thing happening here, without GOD showing the details? Consider also that when things did not go quite the way he might have thought they should, he did not return to Ur. Many times when people's hopes and dreams do not materialize, they return home. Abram did not do that and made a temporary move instead.

Gen. 12:11-13 "And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee."

> "And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: and it will come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they will say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be well with me for thy sake, and that my soul may live because of thee." (ASV)

"fair" — yapeh — *"An adjective meaning lovely, beautiful"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 460).

GOD had made a number of promises to Abram. Now Abram goes into Egypt, but he is fearful that he will be killed by someone who wants Sarai to be his wife. In this case, did Abram rely upon GOD to protect him, or did he try to help GOD keep His promises? Where is his faith in GOD? Later he would become a great man of faith, but for the present he had a lot of growing to do before that time.

Sarai is sixty-five years old at this time, and yet notice the word used of her. Her beauty is such that other men would desire her for her beauty's sake. In his commentary, Cook talked about husbands being killed in order that the killers could take their wives. Whereas if she were his sister, they would have to negotiate with him for her hand in marriage. This writer cannot help but consider that David had Uriah killed to cover up his sin and then took Uriah's wife (Bathsheba) to be his wife.

What did Abram do to protect himself? He told a half-truth in order to hide his real relationship with Sarai. Sarai

was indeed his half-sister (Genesis 20:12), but she was also Abram's wife. A half-truth is still a lie when it is meant to deceive. Instead of trusting GOD for his and Sarai's safety, he concocted a plan of his own. It then took GOD to straighten out the whole affair.

Did Abram act in a cowardly and selfish manner? His attitude seems to be *"Whatever will keep me safe is what I need to do no matter what disgrace it might bring to my wife or others."* He was willing to sacrifice another for his own benefit.

Gen. 12:14-15 "And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house."

> "And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. And the princes of Pharaoh saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house." (ASV)

The word "fair" is the same word used by Abram to describe his wife. This writer has often told people that he is married to the most beautiful woman in the world, and he believes that every husband who does not feel that way about his own wife is very foolish. Abram's assessment of his wife's beauty was shared by the people of Egypt. Further, notice that they thought she was "very fair."

The princes of Egypt were probably those who made up the official court of Pharaoh. These would seek to please their monarch for the purpose of promotion. They go to Pharaoh and tell him about Sarai in glowing terms ("praised" – ASV). Whereupon she was taken into Pharaoh's house. It is probable that she would have been added to his harem as a second wife, a status that all in the harem held except the queen.

Abram had feared that someone would want Sarai as his wife and would take her. That is what happened. Abram did not think the Egyptians had good morals, but when one looks at the rest of the account, he sees that they were much better than Abram thought. Verse eighteen suggests that Pharaoh would not have taken Sarai if he had known she was married. How often do people judge the morals of others without adequate information?

Gen. 12:16 "And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels."

> "And he dealt well with Abram for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels." (ASV)

When Eastern traditions are observed with regard to marriages, one sees that gifts were given to the family of the bride. In many ways, the bride was purchased for the groom in this manner. The wealthier the groom's family, the more opulent the gifts.

Abram was afraid that he would be killed for Sarai. Instead, he became very rich, whereas the one who took Sarai was punished.

Gen. 12:17-18 "And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?"

> "And Jehovah plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?" (ASV)

"plagued" — naga — *"A verb meaning to touch, to reach, to strike. The basic import of this verb is physical contact from one person to another"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 706); *"To smite, beat, strike; to punish; to touch, cause to touch; to reach, cause to reach; to arrive; to inflict plagues; to obtain. The essential meaning is to physically contact something or someone"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Is GOD's grace being shown to Abram and especially to Sarai? Abram lied about the relationship he had with Sarai, yet GOD restored her to him, though he did not deserve it after the way he had traded Sarai for his own safety. When one looks at these verses, he sees GOD's protection for His imperfect people. (1) GOD protected His own promise of offspring through Abram and Sarai — the promised seed now and in the future. (2) He protected Sarai's honor. Further, GOD was teaching man through this account to trust Him to work things out in His own time, and that man's schemes to fulfill GOD's promises are worthless and often quite harmful.

Considering this context and the fact that men often had more than one wife, Pharaoh was in the right here. In all good conscious Pharaoh thought Sarai was available to be one of his wives. Pharaoh had every right to be angry with Abram and his questions register such.

The question arises as to how Pharaoh knew that these plagues came from GOD because of Sarai. This is a question which can never be answered this side of Heaven. One thing is for sure — in one way or another, GOD made it very clear as to why these plagues came upon Pharaoh.

Another thought which needs to be addressed here concerns Pharaoh and Abram's actions. It is truly sad in any generation when unbelievers' morals are greater that

those of a believer. This same kind of thing is seen in First Corinthians chapter five. There a Christian had his father's wife — "and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles."

Gen. 12:19 "Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way."

> "why saidst thou, She is my sister, so that I took her to be my wife? now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way." (ASV)

This verse is important in considering the morality of ancient Egypt and Pharaoh's innocence in this whole matter. (1) It is obvious that the Egyptians had a high regard for marriage. (2) Pharaoh had been told that Sarai was Abram's sister. According to what he was told, she was eligible to be one of his wives. (3) As soon as he found out that she was Abram's wife, he restored her. Some might say he returned her because of the plagues brought upon him and his people, but that seems to be dishonest reasoning considering the context. The plagues (whatever they were) were brought to keep Pharaoh from violating Sarai. Pharaoh acted with honor in this affair. Abram acted in shame and with a lack of faith in GOD's promises.

Gen. 12:20 "And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had."

> "And Pharaoh gave men charge concerning him: and they brought him on the way, and his wife, and all that he had." (ASV)

Pharaoh now does what another Pharaoh will do to the promised seed-line — he drove them out of Egypt. Where Pharaoh had originally looked upon Abram and his people favorably, he now looked upon them with contempt. Was it within the realms of possibility that this Pharaoh (who had a lofty consideration of marriage) might have been converted to Abram's GOD if Abram had not been dishonest? When a person who claims to be a Christian does not act like one, it will keep people away from the GOD of Heaven — not draw them near to Him.

Genesis — Chapter Thirteen

Gen. 13:1-4 "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his

wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD."

> "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the South even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Ai, unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah." (ASV)

The first thing noticed is that after Pharaoh kicked him out of Egypt, Abram "went up." This refers to elevation, as the term is used in the Bible. Egypt is literally a lower elevation than Palestine (He went "down" into Egypt — Genesis 12:10).

The second thing noticed is that Sarai and Lot are mentioned as returning with him. Some have tried to say that there is no evidence that Lot went with Abram to Egypt. Here one is told that he came out of Egypt with Abram. One cannot come out of something he was not in. Further, in verse ten, one is told that Lot viewed the plain of Jordan and compared it to the "land of Egypt." How someone use something for a comparison of that what he has never seen?

Next one notices that Abram was very rich. Wealth of that time was measured more by the animals one had, more than the silver and gold he possessed.

> *"An Arab sheich is considered rich who has a hundred or two hundred tents, from sixty to a hundred camels, a thousand sheep and goats respectively"* (JFB, p. 133).

The terms used with regard to Abram show that he was "very rich" — exceedingly rich. He was considered rich when he first entered the land; now he was exceedingly rich when he returned from Egypt.

When Abram returned from Egypt, he first journeyed to the place where he had pitched his tent and built an altar before he went to Egypt — "between Bethel and Hai." It seems pretty evident that he went there to worship GOD.

Gen. 13:5-7 "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land."

> "And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land." (ASV)

"strife" — riyb — *"A masculine noun meaning a strife, a controversy, a contention. The primary idea of this noun is that of a quarrel or dispute"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1052); *"It means quarrel, contest (personal or legal), strife, contention, controversy, feud, dispute, a judicial or forensic cause, a lawsuit, litigation, a plea; an adversary"* (Zodhiates, CD).

One is now informed that Lot had also become rich in livestock. Further, there is not enough room for their combined livestock. When such crowded situations occur, there is often conflict over the resources needed.

Why are the Canaanite and Perizzite mentioned here? Because they saw the strife which existed between these brethren. This should not have been — they were outsiders. If they were going to have a good influence on those around them they needed to live in peace. They were hurting that influence by fighting among themselves. This would obviously hurt their efforts to evangelize these people.

"Unbelievers always rejoice when believers quarrel" (Smith, p. 123).

What about the church today? What kind of reputation does strife have in the community? When the world sees such bad behavior, will it want any part of a congregation which acts like the world?

> "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

Where a congregation acts in such a way, it will take years and years to overcome. This is part of the reason why the Bible says that a Christian who walks disorderly is to be withdrawn from (2 Thessalonians 3:6). One who will not walk as GOD has directed will cause fusses and fights with those who are trying to obey GOD. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed" (Amos 3:3)?

One might also consider the idea of wealth here. Wealth is not necessarily right or wrong — it depends on the attitude one has about wealth and how he uses or misuses it. Wealth was a blessing to Abram, but it was a disaster for Lot. As will be seen later, Lot walked by sight and not by faith — carnal desires came first in his life.

Gen. 13:8-9 "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

> "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left." (ASV)

Sometimes when a problem develops between people or brethren, the best thing to do is separate. Both can then go their ways, and both can accomplish something good. This was the case with the apostle Paul and Barnabas when they had their dispute over John Mark (Acts 15). The dispute could not be settled in any other way than to divide, and each continued his work for the Lord in different places. Because the land could not support both of their families, the strife would have probably continued to fester. The best solution was to separate. Better to divide and remain friends than to force the issue and end up possibly bitter enemies for life.

> "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4).

This was what Abram was doing. He was concerned about Lot and his welfare. He was concerned for peace among all of the family.

Abram, as the family leader, should have been able to make his choice of the land and leave whatever was left to Lot. Consider also that the land had been promised to Abram. But Abram's faith appears to have grown, and he trusted GOD to take care of and provide for him. Further, one sees humility on his part in offering Lot the choice. Finally, one can see the lack of selfishness on Abram's part. Unfortunately, Lot will show a growing interest in the material which will ultimate lead to great loss.

Gen. 13:10-11 "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other."

> "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar. So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other." (ASV)

When Abram offered Lot the choice of the land, Lot should have said "Oh, no." He should have told Abram that it was his right to choose. Instead, he "lifted up his eyes" (walked by sight) to look over all the land. Notice what Lot looked at. He looked at the physical attributes of the land. How many today do the same thing? Men look for a physical advantage (and in particular at what they consider to be beautiful). What man should look for is what will give him a spiritual advantage. Decisions should be made based on what will nurture the soul, not the pocket book.

> "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matthew 16:25-26)?

Lot was not thinking about the spiritual welfare of his family; instead, he thought of physical comfort through prosperity. He deceived himself in refusing to believe that "evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33, NKJV).

> *"How many, alas! imperil the good of their souls for the prospect of worldly advantage"* (Lange, quoted by Crawford, Vol. 3, p. 98).

One of the things which should be considered here is that Lot's decision affected not only his immediate families well being. What about the spiritual welfare of his servants and their families? He took them to this place of evil and destruction, too, and one does not see any of them leaving with him and his two daughters.

Watch Lot's downward progression. (1) Like Eve, he looked with longing for that which would bring him great spiritual harm. (2) He moved closer to this evil place and its influences. (3) Finally, he settled among them (in the city).

> "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and nigh" (Psalm 1:1-2).

The deciding factor seems to have been that the area he chose was "well watered." A comparison is made between the garden and Egypt, both of which had been well watered and were thus very fertile. It is also noted by Moses that this was the condition before GOD destroyed these cities. This indicates that this condition no longer existed at the time Moses recorded this. It is believed by most that these cities had existed in what is now the southern end of the Dead Sea. While they seem to have existed in the immediate area of the Dead Sea, no one knows exactly where they were located. It may be that the entire area known as the Dead Sea was where this well

watered plain existed.

Knowing the rest of the account, the final phrase of verse eleven seems ominous — "they separated themselves the one from the other." Lot separated himself, his family, and servants from the one through whom great spiritual blessings had been promised. He separated himself from the righteous influence which could have been theirs. He separated himself from the land of promise. He should have asked GOD, *"Where do you want me?"*

Gen. 13:12-13 "Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."

> "Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly." (ASV)

"wicked" — ra — *"An adjective meaning bad, evil. The basic meaning of this word displays ten or more various shades of the meaning of evil according to its contextual usage. It means bad in a moral and ethical sense and is used to describe, along with good, the entire spectrum of good and evil; hence, it depicts evil in an absolute, negative sense, as when it describes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1062); *"The essential meaning of ra' is the inability to come up to good standards. It is the opposite of tRoMv, good"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"sinners" — hatta — *"A masculine noun meaning sinners and an adjective meaning sinful...As a noun, it is used to describe those who, by their actions, are under the wrath and judgment of God and face ultimate destruction"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 329); *"It means sinner, offender, criminal; a person who sins habitually and is subject to the consequences of his actions"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"exceedingly" — meod — *"A substantive, adverb, or adjective in function, very, greatly, great, abundance; might, power"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 559).

The first thing to be observed is the immediate result of this separation. Abram lived in the promised land — Canaan. Lot lived in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom. This indicates that Lot was still living as a nomad in the region of these cities. But notice that he had pitched his tent toward Sodom. He pitched his tent toward the city which GOD would later visit to see how sinful it was. A city which GOD destroyed because of its exceeding wickedness. This writer wonders if Sodom was the worst of these cities.

One should notice the description GOD gave of these cities at the time Lot moved his family toward them. A few writers say that the description of this wickedness is a description of the future. But the text clearly identifies the fact that they were very wicked when Lot moved close to them. They will get worse.

Before moving on, let one consider Lot for a moment. At this point, one must consider that Lot may not have been desirous of doing anything evil. The Scriptures clearly show that he was not interested in involving himself in the sins of these cities. Further, he obviously stood against the primary sin of these cities, as seen in chapter nineteen. No, Lot was not perfect as later events prove, but one should remember what is said of Lot in 2 Peter 2:6-9.

> "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (Emphasis mine, RK).

From these passages, one learns that Lot may not have been "perfect" (without sin), but he was brought out of Sodom by GOD because GOD considered him to be just and godly. One cannot be considered such if he does not have a heart which seeks GOD after he has failed to obey Him.

Gen. 13:14-18 "And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD."

> "And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: So that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give

it. And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah." (ASV)

GOD had promised Abram a homeland for his people. One of the things which seems to have been behind Abram's giving Lot a choice of the land was trust. GOD had promised, and Abram could afford to be magnanimous in giving Lot the choice. Abram seems to be trusting GOD as to where he should be. After all, had not GOD guided him from Ur to this land?

With trust in GOD apparently being exhibited, then GOD renewed the promises He had formerly given Abram. After renewing these promises, GOD told Abram to journey in the land that He will give him. Whereupon Abram leaves Bethel and journeys to Hebron, which is about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. What does he do when he gets there? He worships GOD! GOD has made mankind promises of an eternal reward, but How many trust Him and worship Him?

Genesis — Chapter Fourteen

Gen. 14:1-2 "And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of

Elam, and Tidal king of nations; That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar."

> "And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar)." (ASV)

Here is an account of four kings (Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer, and Tidal) from the east coming against five kings (Bera, Birsha, Shinab, Shemeber, and an unnamed king of Zoar) in the Dead Sea area. Tidal is called the "king of nations." Coffman says the word "nations" was simply the name of the city he ruled over (Goiim – ASV). This could also be a title he gave himself. From the words of verse four, it appears that all of these kings were "under-kings" of Chedorlaomer. None of these kings has absolutely been identified as yet. It was thought for years that Amraphel was possibly Hammurabi, but the date is wrong. Hammurabi came on the scene twenty years after the events of this chapter (Leupold, p. 447). For years the skeptics said that none of these names were real, but (as usual) the archeological spade has proven them wrong (Coffman, p. 193). It should also be remembered that during this time, there were many "city kings." They ruled over a city and the area around that city.

Gen. 14:3-4 "All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled."

> "All these joined together in the vale of Siddim (the same is the Salt Sea). Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled." (ASV)

"rebelled" — marad — *"A verb meaning to rebel. This word usually described the activity of resisting authority, whether against the Lord or against human kings"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 666); *"This primary root means to be obstinate; to resist, rebel, be rebellious, revolt; to disobey. About half of its occurrences refer to rebellion against man and the other half denote rebellion against God"* (Zodhiates, CD).

The "All these" of verse three indicates the kings of verse two. The kings of this region had previously been subjugated by Chedorlaomer (v. 5). When kings subjugated another king or land, a tribute (tax) was placed upon them. Most of the time when a subjugated king rebelled, he did so by refusing to pay this tax, thus signaling that he no longer obeyed that king. Sometimes when the ruling king sent his tax gatherers the rebellious

people would kill them (as in the case of Abram in First Kings 12:18). The kings of the "salt sea" had been serving Chedorlaomer for twelve years when they rebelled.

It is interesting that the "vale of Siddim" where the kings of the south met is identified as "the salt sea" (Dead Sea). *Is GOD telling us that the five cities he destroyed were where the Dead Sea is today?* Remember, the Holy Spirit told Moses to write these things long after the events which occurred.

Gen. 14:5-7 "And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar."

> "And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to En-mishpat (the same is Kadesh), and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazazon-tamar." (ASV)

The conflict which this chapter records has not been found in any archaeological records and has therefore been labeled by critics as a myth. But there is good reason why no archaeological record may be found. As Leupold notes, *"Egyptian and Babylonian kings were not wont to have chronicles made of their defeats, and this expedition ended disastrously for Chedorlaomer"* (p. 450). Further, the cities where some record may have been found by archaeology were so totally destroyed by GOD that no one knows where they were.

None of the groups mentioned here can be definitely identified, although there are a number of guesses as to who they might have been. One question which has been asked is that, if it were the five kings of the valley which rebelled, *why were these other people attacked?* One of the possible answers is to protect against a possible attack from the rear when they were dealing with the five kings of the plain. Another thought is that they took this occasion to strip the land of plunder and capture more territory, bringing others into subjection and gaining more tribute.

Gen. 14:8-9 "And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and

they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five."

> "And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar); and they set the battle in array against them in the vale of Siddim; against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against the five." (ASV)

The major players are named, and the place of battle is designated as "in the vale of Siddim." Most scholars believe this valley was at the southern end of what is now the Dead Sea and is presently under water. The fact is, no one knows for sure where this valley was.

Gen. 14:10-12 "And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."

> "Now the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." (ASV)

"slime" — hemar — *"A masculine noun referring to slime, tar, pitch, bitumen, asphalt"* (Baker/Carpenter).

The vale or valley of Siddim was full of slime pits. Any one of the items mentioned in the definition above would have been a valuable commodity in those times. It is noted that the southern confederacy of Sodom and its allies were defeated. *Did the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah die there? Or does this simply refer to their being defeated there?* When looking ahead to verse seventeen, these kings appear to be alive. There is the possibility that new kings were appointed if they died, but that possibility seems unlikely.

> *"In Hebrew it is impossible to tell whether the subject of fell is the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, or some of their soldiers"* (Willis, quoted by Coffman, p. 196).

The cities of the defeated armies were ransacked, a common event in war. The most important factor of this defeat was the capture of Lot. It should be noted that Lot is pictured as a resident of Sodom. Before, he was seen as pitching his tent **toward** Sodom. Now he was a resident. Question: *Would Abram have gotten involved if*

Lot had not been taken captive?

Gen. 14:13-14 "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan."

> "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: now he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan." (ASV)

One of those from the defeated armies escaped and went to Abram and reported what had transpired and that Lot had been captured. Abram is also called the "Hebrew." This is the first time this designation is found in the Scriptures. Leupold and others believe it means *"'the man from across the river,' i.e.., the Euphrates"* (p. 457). At a later date, this term will be used in an ethnic sense to designate the people of GOD.

It is also noted that Abram had reached a status where others wanted to be allied with him. Three are mentioned here — Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner. The greatness and wealth of Abram is further seen in that he was able to arm three hundred and eighteen men who were born in his own household. One cannot help but wonder how many other men there were who could not go to war or needed to stay behind to protect the possessions and families. Plus, there would be the women and children of Abram's household. Abram's men of war were joined by those in league with Abram. This was still probably a small army in comparison to the one of the four kings of the north. But, Abram had a distinct advantage — GOD was on his side.

Abram's army pursued the kings of the north and caught up with them at Dan. *Where was this Dan?* Some believe it was the place which eventually became the northern border of Israel. There is another Dan which was east of the southern end of the Dead Sea (Leupold, p. 459). Whichever of these is spoken of, the point is that Abram pursued this invading army until he caught them.

Gen. 14:15-16 "And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."

"And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." (ASV)

Here one sees the military accomplishment of Abram. *But was it simply that Abram was such a good leader, or did his success depend on something else?* When one looks at Judges 7:16, he sees the same tactic used — division of forces into three groups and attack by night. In that context, it is clear that GOD was involved in the strategy which brought victory to a much smaller force of combatants. Further, one should note that Abram was involved in this battle, no doubt leading his troops against the enemy (unlike David in Second Samuel chapter eleven).

> *"Jamieson says that the plan Abraham followed is the same that is followed by Arab chieftains today. 'When a defeated party resolves to pursue the enemy they wait till these are fast asleep; then, as they have no idea of posting sentinels, they rush upon them from different directions, striking down the tent poles — if there is any fight at all, it is the fray of a tumultuous mob — a panic commonly ensues, and the whole contest is ended with little or no loss on either side'"* (Whitaker, p. 174).

After initially smiting the enemy, Abram and his forces pursued the enemy to Hobah. The KJV says that Hobah is on the "left hand of Damascus," while the NKJV says it was to the "north of Damascus." Leupold helps one's understanding here by pointing out that *"the expression missemo'l, 'to the left,' means 'to the north of,' because the Hebrew gets his bearings by facing the 'east'"* (p. 460).

The success of this military venture is seen in verse sixteen, where it is stated that everything taken from the kings of the south was recaptured by Abram. It is thought by Leupold that the term "the people" refers to more than the citizens of these cities. He believed this term meant *"the people bearing arms"* (IBID), thus referring to the soldiers, possibly the soldiers he took with him. This writer's research of the Hebrew leads him to believe that it simply refers to the people as a whole. Yet, he sees the possibility that there may be another designation, since the text mentions the women, which would tend to indicate the people who had been taken captive from these cities.

Gen. 14:17 "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale."

"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return

from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shaveh (the same is the King's Vale)." (ASV)

This verse gives one of the two primary kings which will be mentioned in the following section — the king of Sodom (Bera, v. 2, or possibly his successor). It can logically be implied that Bera, king of a wicked city, was himself wicked.

The "king's dale," or *"king's valley,"* is mentioned in one other passage — 2 Samuel 18:18. The location of this place is unknown. Leupold says *"as a rule, expositors seek this valley northeast of Jerusalem, in the valley of the Kidron"* (p. 462).

Gen. 14:18 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High GOD."

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of GOD Most High." (ASV)

This verse introduces the Bible student to one of the great mysteries of the Bible. *Who was Melchizedek?* Baker/Carpenter say that his name means *"king of righteousness"* or *"the king is righteous"* (p. 620). This seems to indicate that Melchizedek was a good man — a righteous man, a man of GOD.

What was Melchizedek? This verse says two things: (1) he was the king of Salem ("king of peace" and Salem is Jerusalem – Psalm 76:2) and (2) a priest of GOD. As a king-priest, he is later shown to be a type of Christ.

It was prophesied by the Psalmist that Christ would be a priest.

"The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4).

How could the Messiah be a priest? Jesus was born, lived and died under the Mosaic system. Further, He was born into the tribe of kings — Judah. Under the law, only one born into the family of Levi could be a priest. The point is that Jesus could not be a priest while He lived upon the earth. But He became a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek lived before the Law of Moses came into being. Therefore, he could serve as both priest and king. After the Law of Moses was nailed to the cross, Jesus ascended back to Heaven where He is not only priest and king, He is also our High Priest (the highest position a priest could attain).

"For He testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec...(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of

Melchisedec:)" (Hebrews 7:17, 21).

Christ and Melchizedek were priest and king outside of the confines of the Law of Moses. Speaking of Christ, note what the writer of Hebrews states.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1).

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of GOD, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:14-15).

Who made Christ a High Priest? Did He simply take the role upon Himself without authority as did king Saul (1 Samuel 13:8-16)? It was GOD the Father who appointed Jesus to be a High Priest, just as He had appointed members of the tribe of Levi to be priests under the Law of Moses.

"So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec...Called of GOD an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:5-6, 10).

Another thing learned about Melchizedek is that there is no genealogy for him.

"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of GOD; abideth a priest continually" (Hebrews 7:3).

This statement in Hebrews has confused many people. It is not saying that Melchizedek did not have physical parents, that he did not have a literal beginning, nor that he did not literally die. The Son of GOD literally had no beginning and no end. But Melchizedek was a human being, and all human beings have a beginning and an end.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

There is no genealogy for the Son of GOD, and like Him, there is no genealogy given for Melchizedek.

Because of the misunderstanding of Hebrews 7:3, some have declared that the Melchizedek of the Genesis record was a theophany (a visible manifestation of the

preincarnate Son of GOD or deity).

Melchizedek brought bread and wine to Abram when he victoriously returned. *Was this meant to satisfy their hunger, or was it brought and offered as a thank-offering to GOD?* The answer to this question is not given in the Scriptures. It is, however, reasonable to assume that sacrifices to GOD were made at this time, considering Melchizedek's priesthood and the character of Abram.

Why is it suggested by some that Melchizedek could not have been a priest of the true GOD because he was not from the lineage of the chosen people? Was not Moses' father-in-law a priest of GOD, though he was not of the lineage of Abraham? Both examples, Jethro and Melchizedek, clearly show that, among the societies which existed, there was a knowledge among some of the true GOD. Further, it shows that some of these people had a high regard for GOD and faithfully followed Him.

Gen. 14:19-20 "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High GOD, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the Most High GOD, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

> "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of GOD Most High, possessor of Heaven and earth: and blessed be GOD Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all." (ASV)

"tithe" — maaser — *"A masculine noun meaning tithe, tenth. This word is related to eser, meaning ten, and often means tenth"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 648); *"These nouns come from 'aMsar and mean a tenth (part) or a tithe"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Who gives a blessing to whom? Melchizedek pronounced a blessing on Abram. The Scriptures point out that "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Hebrews 7:7). Abram was the chosen one of GOD to bring forth a nation dedicated to GOD and through whom the Messiah would come. Yet, Melchizedek was greater than Abram. This again points to the fact that there were still in that time those who were dedicated to the Most High GOD in the world.

> *"A Canaanite prince by whom the true faith was retained amid the gloom of surrounding paganism"* (Whitelaw, p. 209).

It should be acknowledged that Abram recognized the superiority of Melchizedek in that he accepted the blessing from him. This is revealed to the reader in that Abram, after receiving the blessing, imparted a tenth (a tithe) of all (cf. Hebrews 7:1-2, 9-10) to Melchizedek. *A tenth of what? Did Abram give him a tenth of all the spoils, or was this a*

tenth of all he personally owned? This is the first mention of tithing in the Scriptures. Regarding this tenth, it should be noted that Abram willingly and voluntarily gave the tenth to Melchizedek. At this time there is no recorded mandate for giving a tenth as there will be when the Law of Moses was given. But consider, when the Law of Moses was given a tenth was set forth as the proper amount to give. This seems to indicate that GOD had set a tenth though there is no command to do so.

One of the things which should be emphasized here is that the priesthood of Melchizedek was greater than the Levitical priesthood. This is seen in that Abram, through whom the Levitical priesthood would come, paid tithes to Melchizedek. Likewise, the priesthood of Christ is greater than the Levitical priesthood.

Gen. 14:21-24 "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the Most High GOD, the possessor of Heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

> "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, GOD Most High, possessor of Heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men that went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their portion." (ASV)

The king of Sodom wanted the souls of those who had been captured returned to him and told Abram he could keep all of the rest. The fact is that under customs of that time, Abram could claim both the people and all the spoils for himself as conquerer. He did not have to return anything to Bera.

Abram answered Bera by telling him that he had made an oath that he would keep nothing for himself. *Was this Abram's faith manifesting itself in the promise GOD had made to provide for him?* It would seem that Abram does not want to be dependent upon anyone except GOD.

> "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"(Romans 13:8).

This seems to be borne out in verse twenty-three. Abram tells Bera that he will not be able to say henceforth that he

had made Abram rich. The "thread" and "shoelatchet" are used to show that he would not take even the most insignificant things by the hand of Bera.

Abram does lay claim to one thing, and that was that his forces had to eat during this time. The food which they consumed was what one might say was a wage that they deserved. No one could rightly deny them this. But Abram's generosity in this matter was his alone. He did not have the right to make this arrangement for the three leaders who joined him in freeing the people of these cities. The allies of Abram could take of the spoil if they chose. It is not revealed whether they took Abram's lead or not in this matter.

One should note that Abram accepted food and drink from Melchizedek — his hospitality. But he accepted nothing from Bera, king of Sodom. *Could this be a recognition of the different character of the two individuals?*

Genesis — Chapter Fifteen

Gen. 15:1 "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

> "After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." (ASV)

After the events of conquering the four kings of the north and the blessings bestowed by Melchizedek, GOD again spoke to Abram.

That Abraham feared something seems obvious from the fact that GOD saw the need to reassure him. Of what was he afraid? Some have speculated that he may have been fearful of retribution from the kings of the north or maybe some danger from the people around him. These speculations are laid to rest in the context, as it shows that he was afraid of being childless (vv. 2-3). GOD had promised him numberless descendants (Genesis 13:16); yet, growing old he had no children.

GOD told Abram, "I am your shield, and thy exceeding great reward." The shield is an emblem of protection. The Psalmist states, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him" (Psalm 28:7). The idea is that GOD will be his protector. He has always been a protector of His people and always will be.

> "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

GOD's servants today also have a shield provided by GOD to protect them.

> "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16).

Note that GOD assured Abram that reward comes from Himself. In point of fact, the only reward worth attaining is that which GOD gives. Abram had just rejected a reward offered to him by the king of Sodom but accepted that which came from GOD's High Priest (Melchizedek). This seems to indicate that Abraham was not interested in any blessing or praise from man, but treasured such from GOD. One should learn from Abram that what man offers him is only worth something on earth and has no bearing on eternity.

Gen. 15:2-3 "And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou

give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir."

> "And Abram said, O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." (ASV)

"steward" — meseq — *"A masculine noun meaning an heir, a steward. It is used of a person who has the legal and familial qualifications to inherit what is rightfully his"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 689).

GOD had promised Abram that he would have many descendants and that nations would come from his descendants. Abram is growing older, and yet he has no children. Naturally, he asked GOD how He would fulfill His promise under these circumstances.

As things presently stood, all Abram could see was that Eliezer of Damascus would inherit all that he had. In looking at the definition of "steward," it seems to give insight into customs of that time. The word used indicates that Eliezer, though not related to Abram, had a legal claim to be his heir. This seems to indicate that the property of a man who did not have children went to his chief servant upon his death. This is strange to one today, because it usually goes to the surviving wife.

One of the things this writer considers here is the question asked. Is it wrong to question GOD? Not if the questions are like those Abram asked — questions seeking answers to a promise. One cannot also help considering the patience of GOD as He waits for Abram's faith to mature. Abram had gone through a number of trials (tribulations) to this point. Some of which he passed, and others he had failed. But through it all, he continued to follow GOD's directions and learned more and more to lean upon Him.

> "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Man needs to learn to wait upon the Lord and not try to help Him out through his own frail efforts. Unfortunately for the world, Abram and Sarai became desperate later, forgetting to wait on Him. GOD knows what, where and when it is the right time.

Gen. 15:4-5 "And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number

them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

> "And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; But he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (ASV)

GOD answered Abram's prayer. GOD is listening, He cares, and He responds. Such is always the case. A danger in the Christian age is that, since He does not directly contact man today, man may be tempted to think that GOD is not listening. He may think that, in times of distress, GOD does not care. Some are tempted to say (because they did not get what they wanted when they wanted it) that GOD does not help or provide. But nothing is further from the truth. GOD answered Abram then, and He answers man today!

GOD emphatically told Abram that Eliezer will not be his heir. Abram will have a son, and the generations which flow from him will not be able to be numbered, just as the stars cannot be numbered. Be assured of one thing — GOD knows how many descendants Abram has had.

> "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names" (Psalm 147:4).

The current text deals with physical lineage, and it is true that one cannot begin to count all those who have physically descended from Abram. But one should not forget that Abram's firstborn was descended from him in another likeness — spiritually. Further, one today can be an heir of Abram, even, though he physically has not one drop of a descendants blood flowing in him.

> "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Like the rainbow, every time Abram saw the stars of heaven, he would have been reminded of GOD's promise.

Gen. 15:6 "And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

> "And he believed in Jehovah; and He reckoned it to him for righteousness." (ASV)

> "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed GOD, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3).

> "Even as Abraham believed GOD, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6).

> "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend

of GOD" (James 2:23).

"And he believed in the Lord" At first glance, this phrase might lead one to think this is the first time Abram's faith was revealed. This is not the case. Faith involves two basic items. (1) Faith is an exercise of trust in someone or something. (2) Faith causes one to act in an obedient manner toward the one trusted. When the person in the burning building trusts the firemen, he will jump into the net when told to. Abram had exercised his faith in GOD by leaving Ur when told to, by leaving Haran when told to, by letting Lot choose where he wanted to live, knowing that GOD would take care of him. Here he simply continues to exercise that faith by accepting GOD's Word in this matter.

Abram is declared as righteous because he had continued (imperfectly at times) to believe GOD's words and then do whatever GOD told him to do. Those who would try to make this a "faith only" verse should carefully study Hebrews chapter eleven. That chapter clearly shows that a faith which saves is a faith which does what one has been told to do. Such false teachers (faith only) need to stop having GOD's word contradict itself and recognize its perfect harmony.

It interests this writer that, of the three verses in the New Testament (quoted above) where the present text is mentioned, the faith only advocates only want to discuss what Paul said. They pass over what is recorded in James. They fail to recognize that Paul discussed the difference between the works of the law (which could not save anyone) and Christianity (which must work by faith).

> "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise (Like Abram, RK) also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:24-26).

Gen. 15:7-8 "And He said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

> "And He said unto him, I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (ASV)

Why does GOD identify Himself as the One Who brought Abram out of Ur? Remember that people of that time identified gods as belonging to a certain area, with boundaries like a nation, so-to-speak. They thought that each group of people had their own god in their own land. There were even those who believed that there were gods

of the hills which could not operate in the plains (or the opposite). GOD reassured Abram that the same One who had made promises to him there was the same one he was dealing with here — GOD is a universal GOD.

Why did GOD bring Abram out of Ur? "to give thee this land" When GOD originally called Abram, it was to lead him to a land that he would give him. And Abram "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). Now GOD was telling Abram, "This is the land I promised you."

Abram then asked for a sign or confirmation that this was the land. This is obviously not stated in doubt but with the same kind of attitude Mary had in asking for more details. GOD has always been willing to give evidence of His will, and He will do so with Abram now.

Gen. 15:9-11 "And He said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away."

> "And he said unto him, Take Me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other: but the birds divided he not. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away." (ASV)

> *"The sign of ancient covenants often involved the cutting in half of animals, so that the pledging parties could walk between them, affirming that the same should happen to them if they broke the covenant"* (MacArthur, p. 35).

Abram had asked GOD how he would know that which GOD promised was going to take place. GOD's answer was a ritual of covenant that was common for that time. There was no need for GOD to do this, but it was done as a concession to assure His servant Abram — to give him peace of mind, so-to-speak.

There are those who have tried to portray the events here as a vision, but this writer is convinced that it was an actual event. It was not until after the dividing of these animals that Abram fell into a deep sleep and the horror of darkness came upon him.

Gen. 15:11-14 "And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger

in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

> "And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance." (ASV)

The fowls here represent birds of prey and are thought by some to represent the afflictions which would come upon Abram's descendants. Abram guarded the covenant sacrifice until the evening, when GOD brought a deep sleep upon him. This deep sleep is the same which was brought upon Adam when GOD created Eve.

This deep sleep is troubling in that Abram will be shown that which is unpleasant, i.e., the enslavement of his descendants. No doubt today, if someone could look ahead in time and tell one that his great-grandchildren would be enslaved, this would be "terrifying" to him.

Note the details of what is next said. It is the descendants of Abram which will endure this. They will be foreigners in a land, but this was not the promised land. Today, one can look ahead and know that the land spoken of here was Egypt. But Abram was not told in which land this would take place. This servitude would take place for four hundred years.

The number four hundred years appears to be a rounded number, for in Exodus 12:40 the more precise number of four hundred and thirty years is given. There are those who have tried to limit the bondage to two hundred and fifteen years. Please note the words of Zerr with regard to this.

> *"Four hundred years. This was fulfilled by the length of time the Israelites were in Egypt. A contrary theory is sometimes heard concerning the length of this sojourn, claiming the actual sojourn in Egypt to have been only 215 years. In order not to seem to contradict the mathematical statements of the scripture, that the sojourn was 430 years, it is offered for support of the shorter term the idea that the sojourn was to start with Abram's time. But the specific language of holy writ forbids such suggestion. If that had been the meaning God had in mind he would have include Abram in the statement. This he did when speaking of another prediction. For instance, when speaking of the*

> *possession of the land of Canaan he said, 'To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever' (13:15). This was true for Abram actually lived in the land. But the prediction now being considered does not include Abram in person. Instead it says 'thy seed shall be,' etc. Again in Ex. 12:40 this 430 years of sojourn was made of the 'children of Israel.' But the name Israel was not known in Abram's day and not until the day of Jacob and that was about the time of their entering therein, or at least in the same generation"* (Zerr, p. 30).

When the Israelites went down into Egypt there were seventy of them (Exodus 1:5). When they left, there were (conservatively) two million of them. Two hundred and fifteen years was not enough time to develop such numbers.

Abram is also shown the hope of his descendants. GOD promised them deliverance from this nation which will hold them in bondage. The time would come when GOD would judge them, i.e., punish them for their sins. When that time came, the Israelites would leave the land of bondage with great sustenance. This was fulfilled in Exodus chapter twelve. Consider this thought: GOD has never promised His people that there will not be difficulties in their lives. But notice that when His people faithfully go through the trials of this life, in the end they will be abundantly blessed — "great substance." This has ever been GOD's promise to His people.

Gen. 15:15-17 "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces."

> "But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces." (ASV)

Abram is told that he will not have to endure the bondage and troubles of his descendants — he will go to his grave in peace. By telling him that he will die in "good old age," he is being informed that the events just mentioned will take place many years from this time. To "go to his fathers" is simply a phrase which designates going to the place of departed spirits (Sheol in the Old Testament — Hades in the New Testament).

The fourth generation here deals from the time that

Israel goes into bondage, and then his descendants will return and receive the land. Why can they not have it now? Because of the justice and longsuffering of GOD. The term "Amorites" is used here to represent all of the nations in the land. But some of these people are still GOD-fearing people, as witnessed by people like Melchizedek. It would not be just to kick these people out of the land simply to give it to another people. Instead, GOD would wait until they did not deserve to exist upon the earth because of their transgressions.

> "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your GOD. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do My judgments, and keep Mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your GOD. Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD. The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is

wickedness. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy GOD: I am the LORD. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you." (Leviticus 18:1-28; emphasis mine, R.K.; cf. Leviticus 20; Deuteronomy 18).

Note that there is a point of corruption which a nation can reach in which it no longer deserves to exist. What happens when that occurs? GOD removes them and replaces them with another, or removes their power so that they are no longer a significant player on the world scene.

Verse seventeen is GOD's concession to Abram. Abram had asked for a sign that these things would come to pass. GOD had ordered him to take these animals and split them in half, placing them so that they faced each other. Now GOD passed through the center of these animals through the symbols of "a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp." The covenant is ratified. Why did not Abram pass between them, as was the normal custom? Because this was a covenant made strictly on GOD's terms. There was nothing for Abram to agree to. Nothing was required of Abram here — but to accept the fact.

Gen. 15:18-21 "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the

Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

> "In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite." (ASV)

Note the phrase "I have given." GOD did not say, "I will give," but rather "I have given." Even though immediate possession did not occur, the promise of GOD would be fulfilled, i.e., in GOD's mind His promise was so sure that He could speak as though it had already been accomplished. The land was theirs.

A general description of the boundaries of the land promised to Abram's descendants is given. Note the following comments on "the river of Egypt."

> *"There are three conjectures concerning this river. The first is, that it is the little rivulet which flows into the sea a few miles south of Gaza; the second, that it is the Sihor, or torrent of Egypt, which passes El-Arish a little to the north-east, dividing the desert from the borders of the pasture-land; and the third, that it is the Pelusiac branch of the Nile"* (JFB, p. 147).

Not only is the limit of the land described by the use of these rivers, but it is also described through the nations which inhabited this area.

Genesis — Chapter Sixteen

Gen. 16:1-3 "Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife."

> "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife." (ASV)

This chapter deals with sin on the part of Abram, Sarai and Hagar. The result of their sins would be the birth of Ishmael and thousands of years of animosity hatred, and war.

Abram had been promised a posterity so great in number that it could not be counted. During his eighty-five years on earth, Abram had had a monogamous relationship with Sarai which had produced no children. How would GOD's promise to Abram be fulfilled if Sarai had no children? Sarai had an idea, and it involved her personal slave, Hagar.

Sarai's plan involved a custom of that time, which is explained by Cook.

> *"In the legal custom of that day a barren woman could give her maid to her **husband** as a **wife**, and the child born of that union was regarded as the first wife's child. If the husband said to the slave-wife's son, 'You are my son,' then he was the adopted son and heir. So Sarai's suggestion was unobjectionable according to the customs of that time"* (p. 56).

The problem is, that just because something is legal by human laws, it does not make it right or legal in GOD's eyes. In the very beginning, GOD made one woman for one man, which showed His intent. He did not make an Eve, Sue, and Maggie for Adam. Further, Jesus informs one that "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8, emphasis mine, RK). The Bible shows that one is to "rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Proverbs 5:18, emphasis mine, RK). Note that it is not the wives of thy youth. GOD never intended for man (or woman) to get and/or get-rid-of as many mates as he desired. The result — Abram, Sarai and Hagar sinned when Abram "went in unto Hagar."

The text states that Hagar was an Egyptian. She was probably acquired in Egypt when Abram went to Egypt to avoid the famine. Was Hagar simply used on this occasion, or did she willingly assent? Either way, sin is involved. If she was used, then the actions of Abram and Sarai were rape. If she consented to this scheme, then she was involved in a scheme to commit fornication.

Was Sarai blaming GOD, and that is why she had to implement this scheme ("the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid")? Or was she simply stating a fact? It appears to this writer from the context that she is blaming GOD for having to give Hagar to Abram.

> "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged GOD foolishly ("with wrong," NKJV)" (Job 1:22).

Another thing to notice is their attempt to help GOD fulfill His purposes. Since when does GOD need man's help to accomplish His will? In "helping" GOD, were they not assuming that GOD could not accomplish His purpose? This was obviously a lack of faith on their part.

The age of Abram and Sarai can also be established from this passage. This fornication was done ten years after they had entered the land of Canaan. Since Abram was seventy-five and Sarai was sixty-five, they are now eighty-five and seventy-five, respectively. It would be another fifteen years before GOD fulfilled His promise to Abram.

Did Abram and Sarai sin against humanity in what they did on this occasion? What about all of the hatred, murder and war exhibited by the descendants of Ishmael down through time? Giving the benefit of the doubt, they thought they were doing something good, helping GOD accomplish His purpose. But from this event came Ishamel, through whose descendants came the Islamic religion which hates both Jew and Christian. A religion which was founded upon war and which has basically been at war ever since.

Should all of these events not be a warning to one today? Even the smallest thing which one may think is not harmful can have far-reaching and inadvertent consequences. One needs to be very careful in the decisions he makes.

Gen. 16:4-5 "And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee."

> "And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I gave my handmaid into they bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: Jehovah judge between me and thee." (ASV)

"despised" — qalal — *"A verb meaning to be slight, to be trivial, to be swift. This word is used in many different ways, but most uses trace back to the basic idea of this word, which is lightness...In many instances, it used to describe speaking lightly of another or cursing another"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 997); *"To be small, be light; to be swift, be; to be lessened; to be despised; to be insignificant, be of small worth; to be easy; to esteem lightly; to revile, curse, execrate; to be lightly esteemed; to be cursed; to bring a curse upon oneself; to lift (a weight); to bring into contempt; to shake; to sharpen; to be moved, to be shaken; to belittle; to make light of, to be trifling; to subside"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Anytime man steps outside of the boundaries GOD has set, he ought to expect unforseen consequences and

problems. How could conflict not be expected when two people are vying for the affections of their mutual "husband?" In the case of this text, there were two reactions. (1) Hagar would feel that she was better than Sarai because she provided an heir. (2) Sarai resented her attitude and probably is involved in jealousy. Hagar was able to give her husband what Sarai could not.

Something that is often missed in this context is an admission of guilt. As noted already, GOD never intended that there be multiple marriages (mates). What had Sarai done? She had arraigned an additional marriage for Abram. She now said, "My wrong be upon thee" (emphasis mine). Let one also consider another aspect of her statement. "My wrong be upon thee" Did Abram sin in allowing this to happen? Yes! He knew GOD's law as well as did Sarai. He was supposed to be the leader in the family and should have forbidden this. Instead, he walked by sight and not by faith in this matter.

"We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Let it be emphasized — man always gets in trouble when he walks by sight and fails to trust GOD. (There are some who believe that Sarai was saying, *"The wrong done to me is your fault."* If this were the case, then Sarai might have been telling Abram to take the responsibility as the head of the house. This does not seem to be a plausible explanation because, Sarai calls upon GOD to judge as to which was wrong in this matter.)

Gen. 16:6 "But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face."

> "But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her that which is good in thine eyes. And Sarai dealt hardly with her, and she fled from her face." (ASV)

"hardly" — anah — *"A verb indicating to be afflicted, to be oppressed, to be humbled. It refers to being oppressed, in a state of oppression"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 852); *"Looking down or brow-beating; to depress, literally or figuratively, transitively or intransitively"* (Strong's).

"But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand" Hagar literally belonged to Sara; she was her bond servant. This was true even though Hagar had been elevated to second-wife status. She was still Sarai's slave and was answerable to her. Even when a second wife was not a slave, she held an inferior position to the original wife.

"do to her as it pleaseth thee" *"do to her as you please"* (NKJV) Abram gave Sarai the green light to do whatever she wanted with Hagar.

"when Sarai dealt hardly ("harshly," NKJV; "afflicted," margin of my Bible) with her, she fled from her face" It

cannot be determined from the original word (see above) whether this was physical or verbal abuse or both. Whatever Sarai did, it was apparently strong enough to cause Hagar to run away.

Gen. 16:7-8 "And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And He said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai."

> "And the angel of Jehovah found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And He said, Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, whence camest thou? and whither goest thou? And she said, I am fleeing from the face of my mistress Sarai." (ASV)

"the angel of the LORD" Who is this angel? Looking ahead to verse thirteen, there is no doubt that this is deity. But it is not GOD the Father, as the word "LORD" indicates. It is an angel of the Father. This seems to be the first instance of a theophany in the Scriptures. (A theophany is an appearance of the pre-incarnate Son of GOD, i.e., the Word who became Jesus the Christ.) There are a number of appearances of "the Word" in the Old Testament. If this were one of the beings Christ created, known as the angels of Heaven, then he would have acted like the angel in "The Revelation" when John tried to worship him.

> "I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship GOD: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

When called "GOD" in the present context, "the angel of the LORD" denied it not. This was therefore deity manifesting Himself to Hagar.

"the fountain in the way of Shur" The way of Shur was a caravan trail which was used to get back and forth from Palestine to Egypt. This was a very rugged journey through inhospitable territory with only a few watering places along the way.

The way the angel of the Lord addressed Hagar should be noted. He appeared to her and said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" First, He let her know that He knew who she was. Second, He reminded her of her position as Sarai's handmaid. Third, the questions were not asked for information but rather to convict her of her actions.

Let one look at the questions "whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" These are important questions for all to consider. Did man come from GOD or from the slime pits of evolution? What one believes with regard to this question will determine his entire outlook on life. Is life

valuable and thus to be preserved, or is one simply an animal which can be disposed of at will (abortion, euthanasia)? "whither wilt thou go?" Does one have an eternal destiny, or is he destined to nothingness in the dirt? If eternity is in the picture, man will temper his actions and thoughts to some degree. If he anticipates no eternal destiny then "eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). He will live as if there is no tomorrow. But remember that GOD said the one who had such a philosophy was a fool.

Just as the questions asked by GOD solicited an answer from Adam, so also these questions brought an honest answer from Hagar. She was fleeing from her mistress Sarai. In answering this way, she acknowledged an obligation to Sarai.

Gen. 16:9-11 "And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction."

> "And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, I will greatly multiply thy seed, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son; and thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction." (ASV)

The first thing Hagar was told to do was to right the wrong she had done in running away. This reminds one of Paul's instructions to Onesimus to return to his master Philemon. Wrongs committed must be made right. Neither of these cases condone slavery, but simply show that obligations must be met. The principles found in the Scriptures, if followed, would eliminate slavery of every kind.

> "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

No man would want to become a slave, so he should not enslave another. At the same time, the Bible does not condone rebellion.

> "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward GOD endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (1 Pet. 2:18-19).

There is one exception for rebellion against man's laws, i.e., when obeying man's laws contradicts GOD's laws.

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey GOD rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The command for Hagar to return to and submit herself to Sarai would be a hard thing to do. But note that there are promises made to her for doing this. First, this son would increase into an exceedingly great multitude. Abram was assured that the promised seed would grow into an exceedingly great multitude. Thus, two great multitudes would come from Abram. Second, Hagar was told that she was going to have a son. In that time without ultra-sound, no one but GOD could predict (without error) what a child's sex would be. Third, GOD gave this child a significant name — Ishmael. The name Ishmael means *"GOD hears."* This seems to indicate that Hagar had come to believe in the GOD Abram served and had petitioned Him regarding her situation.

Gen. 16:12 "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

"And he shall be as a wild ass among men; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell over against all his brethren." (ASV)

"wild" — pere — *"A common noun meaning wild donkey. It is generally taken to refer to a wild ass or donkey"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 915).

"What mother has not cradled a newborn son in her arms and wondered what manner of man he would become" (Smith, p. 137).

A description of the kind of man Ishmael would be was given. He would be a "wild man," i.e., *"a wild donkey man."* The wild donkeys of that time were known for their fierce independence. Job also described the nature of these animals.

"Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing" (Job 39:5-8).

As a wild man, he would be at odds with all others. There would be constant turmoil for Ishmael and his descendants. If one looks at the descendants of Ishmael, the Arab nations, he still sees this conflict today. There seem to be constant wars and disputes among these people. It should also be remembered that Mohammad and Islam came from the seed of Ishmael. When one

studies these, he will find that the adherents of Mohammad and Islam have always been a people addicted to war and turmoil. Over the centuries, give them a few moments of time, and they will be at each other's throats. Plus, one should note their constant quarrels with the descendants of Isaac.

Gen. 16:13-14 "And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou GOD seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered."

> "And she called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a GOD that seeth: for she said, Have I even here looked after Him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered." (ASV)

Beer Lahai Roi — *"well of the living One who sees me"* (Cook, p. 57).

Hagar acknowledged that this was GOD who had spoken to her. She had been living under harsh treatment from Sarai and may well have called upon GOD for help. Yet, the help did not seem to come until now. GOD encouraged her by telling her that she would have a son, what his name would be, and the kind of person that he would be. So, Hagar calls GOD — "Thou GOD seest me." This may indicate that she had thought GOD did not care what she was going through. How many Christians over the years, in times of discouragement, have thought that GOD does not care? One should never forget that GOD sees, yet sometimes one needs to go through troubling times in order for his faith and patience to grow.

> "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3).

"Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?" There are two lines of thought regarding this question. There are those who think that Hagar was wondering how she could be alive after seeing GOD. Others think it is saying that, like Moses on the Mount, she did not look directly at GOD, but saw his hinder parts as he departed. They take this position because no one can look directly at GOD and live. It is this writer's view that she saw GOD and was amazed that He would show Himself to her and bless her as He was doing.

Hagar also named the well Beer-lahai-roi — *"The well of Him that liveth and seeth"* (marginal reading in my Bible). A glance through the Bible sees a number of places which are named or renamed because of events which transpired there. This writer would emphasize that when one travels through this life and things really seem to be terrible, he

should never forget that (1) GOD is living (2) He sees everything, and (3) He cares and does what is best for him. With that in mind, one can get through anything in this life.

Gen. 16:15-16 "And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram."

> "And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bare, Ishmael. And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram." (ASV)

Though not stated, it is apparent that Hagar did as the angel of the Lord instructed her by returning to Abram and Sarai. There, at the appointed time, she brought forth the son GOD had promised her. Abram accepted his parental authority in naming this boy Ishmael. Since this was a name appointed by GOD, How did Abram know what he was supposed to name this child? Did Hagar tell him what had happened in the wilderness, and he believed her account and thus acted? Or did GOD communicate this information directly to him? What is known is that Abram obeyed GOD by faith in this matter, whether the information came from Hagar, GOD, or both.

The text also reveals the age of Abram when Ishmael was born — eighty-six years old. Coupling this with the information given in the next chapter, it will be thirteen years after this birth that GOD will come to him and tell him of the child which will be born to him and Sarai when he is one hundred years old.

Genesis Seventeen

Gen. 17:1-2 "And when Abram was ninety years old and

nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty GOD; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

> "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am GOD Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." (ASV)

"perfect" — tamiym — *"An adjective meaning blameless, complete...When used in a moral sense, this word is linked with truth, virtue, uprightness, and righteousness"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1232).

GOD came to Abram and spoke to him for the fifth time. Abram was ninety-nine years old, and Sarai was eighty-nine. Note the words of the apostle regarding this time of their lives and the faith of Abram.

> "Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of GOD through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:19-22).

How well this fits with the command of GOD in verse one. GOD told Abram to "walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Abram was to walk in truth and uprightness in GOD's sight. When looking at the above passage in Romans, it is obvious that that is exactly what Abram did. He did not doubt GOD's power to do whatever He said He would do. This was true even though, from a physical standpoint, neither he nor Sarai could have children. He understood that nothing is too hard for GOD to accomplish. Further, the term "walk" should cause one to pause and remember that GOD is watching — He knows how one is living.

This is the first time the phrase "Almighty GOD" is used to describe GOD in the Scriptures. It is used to describe the power of GOD, the all-powerful One.

Regard the word "covenant" and the way GOD used it here as a promise that He was going to do something. Notice Morris' comments on this word.

> "God uses the term 'covenant' no less than thirteen times! The adjectives attached to the word are significant. Nine times it is called 'my covenant,' three times it is called 'the covenant betwixt me and you'" (Morris, p. 331).

It should also be observed that GOD was not declaring a new covenant to Abram. He was **reaffirming** the covenant He had already made concerning the generations of

Abram.

"I will let my promise made to thee become a reality" (Strack's translation quoted by Barnes, p. 514).

Gen. 17:3-4 "And Abram fell on his face: and GOD talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations."

"And Abram fell on his face: and GOD talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations." (ASV)

Look at Abram's attitude when GOD spoke to him — he "fell on his face." How did this show his attitude? Falling on the face when one met another showed the superiority of the one met. Falling on one's face before another also showed submission to him. Conquered kings would often come before the conquerer and be required to prostrate themselves before him. Abram was showing his submission to GOD and His will. Abram was also showing his adoration, love, humility, and respect for GOD. Abram was not forced to bow before GOD. He was not told to do it. He voluntarily bowed before GOD.

"Man on his face, God on his throne, only in this posture can God really talk to us" (Unger, p. 63).

One should also pay attention to the phrase "My covenant." This again emphasizes that GOD initiated the covenant; thus, it was not a covenant made between equals. This was a covenant dictated by GOD and guaranteed by Him. Abram's responsibility was to accept it and keep on faithfully serving GOD.

"thou shalt be a father of many nations" This would be fulfilled in the Ishmaelites and the nations which came from them, the Midianites and Edomites. But the most important and greatest of the nations Abram was the father of — **are Christians**.

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:27-29, emphasis mine, RK).

"ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9, emphasis mine, RK).

Gen. 17:5-6 "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of

many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee."

> "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." (ASV)

GOD gave Abram a new name — "Abraham." The name "Abram" means *"exalted father"* (Cook, p. 58); *"high father, father of the height, exalted father"* (McGee, p. 73). The name "Abraham" means *"father of a multitude"* (Cook, p. 58); *"father of many nations"* (MacArthur, p. 38).

> *"In eastern countries the name given in infancy is sometimes in the course of life altered: a change of name is an advertisement of some new circumstance in the history, rank, or religion of the individual who bears it"* (JFB, p. 151).

Gen. 17:7-8 "And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a GOD unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their GOD."

> "And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a GOD unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their GOD." (ASV)

One of the things which should be emphasized in these verses and context is GOD's assurance to Abraham. It is "I will" do this or that. GOD repeated for emphasis the things which He would do. It was not Abraham who established the covenant, who gave the land to himself or to his posterity.

> "everlasting" — olam — *"A masculine noun meaning a very long time. The word usually refers to looking forward but many times expresses the idea of looking backward. It may cover a given person's lifetime; a period of many generations; the time of the present created order; time beyond this temporal sphere, especially when used regarding God"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 814).

Did GOD place any conditions upon "everlasting*?*" Most want to define the word "everlasting" as *"absolutely never ending."* But, as noticed in the definitions above, that is not the definition of the Hebrew word.

> *"The fundamental meaning of the word is 'age*

lasting.' This definition may properly be given to the word in any place it is used. Then, if the age in which the thing being spoken of is endless the word also means endless" (Zerr, p. 34).

It should be considered that, if GOD's commands and promises are not conditional, then His commands can be completely ignored; yet, He would still be obligated to give the promised reward. Is anyone foolish enough to believe GOD will reward those who ignore Him? Apparently there are many such people in the world. The descendants of Abraham later forfeited the right to the land through their disobedience and final rejection of the Messiah — Jesus Christ.

> "Know for a certainty that the LORD your GOD will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your GOD hath given you. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your GOD spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your GOD promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until He have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your GOD hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your GOD, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which He hath given unto you" (Joshua 23:14-16, emphasis mine, RK).

Did the time come when Abraham's descendants forfeited the land because of their idolatry? Study the prophets with regard to the Babylonian captivity which they endured. When they returned from that captivity, they never again controlled the land they once did.

One should also consider the following things. Abraham was promised an innumerable posterity. Physically this was true, and spiritually it is true. Abraham was promised a physical land (Canaan) for his posterity, and his spiritual posterity is promised a spiritual land (Heaven).

Gen. 17:9-10 "And GOD said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee

in their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised."

> "And GOD said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep My covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised." (ASV)

The covenant of circumcision was given to Abraham and his descendants. It should be considered that circumcision did not make them GOD's people. They were already GOD's people. They did this because they were His covenant people — as a sign that they belonged to Him and accepted His covenant. Christians have a like sign in good works. Christians do good works not to be saved, but because they are saved. The good works they do are a sign that they belong to the Lord and that they accept His will for their lives.

The act of circumcision has more meaning than simply a physical act. There is a spiritual meaning which is seen more clearly in the New Testament. This act represents the putting away of evil and, thus, represents an act of purification. The cutting away of the foreskin represented the cutting away of sin from the heart. Circumcision would be a daily reminder to the individual of an obligation to live a pure life before GOD. The symbolism of this was spoken of by Jeremiah.

> "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest My fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings" (Jeremiah 4:4, emphasis mine, RK).

But long before Jeremiah, this symbolism was revealed to GOD's people.

> "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked" (Deuteronomy 10:16).

Again, physical circumcision was a daily reminder of the kind of people the Israelites were to be.

In the New Testament, one sees more evidence of the thoughts above. Speaking of the Law of Moses, the apostle Paul stated that "circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Romans 2:25, emphasis mine, RK). In other words, there was no spiritual value to circumcision unless one were obedient to the law. Then notice how the symbolism of circumcision is found in Christianity.

> "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh" (Romans 2:28).

Who is the circumcision today, i.e., who is the Jew today? It is not one who has been physically circumcised.

> "he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of GOD" (Romans 2:29).

Speaking of Christians, note what Paul said to the Philippians and Colossians.

> "For we are the circumcision, which worship GOD in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3, emphasis mine, RK).

> "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11, emphasis mine, RK).

The fact that circumcision is easily seen to be used to symbolize the removal (the cutting away) of sin is easily seen in the above study. The life of a Christian, daily doing the will of GOD, is the evidence that he belongs to GOD.

Question: When is sin cut away from one, i.e., one who becomes a Christian? When he enters the watery grave of baptism and comes forth a new creature! It is then that he becomes a spiritual Jew, part of the spiritual circumcision.

> "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

> "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

> "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

One major difference between circumcision under the law of Moses and the act of baptism for one to become a Christian should be carefully noted. Physical circumcision was an acknowledgment that one was already a part of the covenant people, whereas Baptism actually admits one into the kingdom of Christ. Another difference to be noted is that physical circumcision was forced on one, i.e., without his consent. Spiritual circumcision comes from a conscious choice, volunteering to be circumcised.

Gen. 17:11-14 "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me

and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant."

> "And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant." (ASV)

Verse eleven states that circumcision was a token of the covenant GOD made with Abraham. Baker/Carpenter state that the word "token" (ot) is *"A masculine noun meaning sign, signal, mark, miracle"* (p. 29). Therefore, circumcision was not the covenant; rather, it was a sign of the covenant that had been given to Abraham in chapter twelve.

Who was to be circumcised? "every man child." This included three groups of males. First would be those physically born into the family of Abraham and the descendants of such. Second, those who were born to those who served in his household. Third, any male bought from outside of this group. When were these males to be circumcised? First, all born as part of his family or those born to his servants were to be circumcised on the eighth day from their birth. Second, those who were purchased were to be circumcised at the time or shortly after their purchase, regardless of age past eight days.

Why was circumcision to be done on the eighth day? This may have something to do with the purification of the mother, as seen in Leviticus 12:1-3.

> "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

Note how closely her uncleanness is associated with the circumcision of the male child. This would continue the significance of circumcision described in verses nine and

ten by this writer. Most importantly, it was done on the eighth day because GOD said do it then. There may also be a medical reason with regard to healing on the eighth day.

Was there a penalty for neglecting to circumcise one? Such a one was to be "cut off from his people." This phrase is used in two ways in the Scriptures. First, to be excluded from the promises of the covenant and the covenant people. Second, it sometimes means to put to death. It is believed that this is what Exodus 4:24-26 is about. There the Lord sought to kill Moses, and Zipporah circumcised their son, and the Lord "let him go." There is no consensus among scholars as to whether excommunication or death is meant in the present chapter.

Gen. 17:15-16 "And GOD said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her."

> "And GOD said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her." (ASV)

Sarai's name is now changed to "Sarah" (*"princess"*), just as Abram's name had been changed to "Abraham." GOD further stated that He would bless her by giving her a son. GOD had promised Abram a son, and he should have accepted the fact that that son's mother would be Sarai. Why? Because of the monogamous institution of marriage as given by GOD in making one man for one woman in the Garden of Eden. Instead, they had sinned with Hagar in providing a son for Abram.

GOD also stated that Sarah would be a mother of nations. How could this be, since she is only going to have one child? This writer would first of all consider that, indeed, a number of kings came through the lineage of Isaac — the kings of Israel and Judah. Further, when one considers the events of Genesis chapter twenty-five with the birth of the twins, he sees the nation and kings of Edom. There is also the spiritual application of this which should be considered. Abraham and Sarah became the father and mother of a spiritual nation which is composed of many nationalities.

> "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to

them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised" (Romans 4:11-12, emphasis mine RK).

Gen. 17:17-19 "Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto GOD, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And GOD said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after Him."

"Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto GOD, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! And GOD said, Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him." (ASV)

Why did Abraham laugh when GOD told him he would have a son with Sarah? Was it because he did not believe barren Sarah could have a child at ninety years old? Or did he laugh in joy, gratitude and thanksgiving? This writer would take the latter position, because he was not rebuked for laughing, whereas when Sarah later laughed, GOD rebuked her.

"And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And He said, Nay; but thou didst laugh" (Genesis 18:13-15).

It would seem that the questions which Abraham asked in verse seventeen were done out of wonder, more like the questions which Mary asked when Gabriel told her she would have a child.

"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

With regard to Abraham's laughter, one should consider Romans 4:17-22.

"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even GOD, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak

in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of GOD through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (emphasis mine, RK).

Why did Abraham make the statement of verse eighteen? No doubt the fact that Ishmael was his son and that he loved him play into this. But it seems to be more than this. A love for a child wants the best for that child. But the promise is going to go through Isaac, and Abraham seems to recognize that that promise excluded Ishmael. Abraham wanted GOD to remember and care for Ishmael, too.

Not only did GOD tell Abraham that he and Sarah were going to have a child — He named the son. He was to be called "Isaac" — a name which means "he laughs" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 464). GOD's covenant with Abraham would be renewed in Isaac and his posterity.

Gen. 17:20-21 "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." (ASV)

Abraham pleaded the case for Ishmael, and GOD honored his request. GOD promised four things for Ishmael and his descendants. (1) He would be made fruitful, (2) he would be multiplied "exceedingly," (3) twelve princes would be born to him, and (4) GOD would make a great nation of him. One of the interesting things which Coffman pointed out is that with regard to Isaac, kings would come, but from Ishmael, it will be princes.

GOD honored Abraham's request for the bondwoman's child, but immediately went back to emphasize Isaac. The emphasis was that the covenant GOD made would not be with Ishmael — it would be with Isaac. The promises made to Isaac would be more extensive, but the most important aspect of that covenant was not the physical. It was the spiritual aspect of the covenant which is most important.

Gen. 17:22 "And He left off talking with him, and GOD went

up from Abraham."

> "And He left off talking with him, and GOD went up from Abraham." (ASV)

Abraham had petitioned GOD on behalf of Ishmael, but GOD had told him Ishmael was not the child of promise. He further told him that within the next year, he and Sarah would have a child, and he would be the child of promise. Further, GOD told them to name the child "Isaac." The whole issue was settled, and GOD seemed to end the conversation abruptly. The thing of importance which should be noted here is that "GOD went up from Abraham." It is evident that this is another one of the theophanies of the Old Testament.

Gen. 17:23-27 "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as GOD had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him."

> "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as GOD had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him." (ASV)

The first thing to notice here was the immediate obedience of Abraham to GOD's directions. On the very day ("selfsame day") GOD gave him these directions, he obeyed Him — there was no hesitation.

One of the things which should not be overlooked here was the faith exhibited by Abraham and the men of his family. The operation of circumcision is going to leave Abraham's "family" helpless if an enemy attacked them (Note the example of Shechem in Genesis chapter thirty-four.). Since they would not be able to defend themselves, they must rely upon GOD to take care of them. This reminds this author of another like incident, when circumcision needed to be renewed after the wilderness wandering. In Joshua chapter five, the Israelites had

entered hostile territory and could expect attack by their enemies. But GOD caused a paralyzing fear to come upon the Canaanites so that they left Israel alone during the time it took to recuperate from such an operation.

The ages of Abraham and Ishmael are also given at the time of this surgery. Abraham was ninety-nine, and Ishmael was thirteen.

> *"But as for the Arabians, they circumcise after the 13th year, because Ishmael, the founder of their nation, who was born to Abraham by the concubine, was circumcised at that age"* (Josephus as quoted by Zerr, p. 35).

Some have questioned why there is so much repetition in this passage. It is for the purpose of emphasizing the immediate obedience of Abraham.

Genesis Chapter Eighteen

Gen. 18:1-3 "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:"

> "And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:" (ASV)

Note that the LORD did not appear to Abraham in a vision or a dream. He could have. Instead, he appeared to Abraham in the form of a human being. When Abraham first saw these "men," he had no indication that anything more than three men had appeared on the scene. The deity of the One will not be revealed until verse 13ff, and the other two men will not be seen as angels until chapter 19:1ff. A further proof that Abraham did not recognize them as anything but men at this time would seem to be his offering them food.

Why did GOD appear to Abraham at this time? From the context, it appears that there were two reasons. (1) To announce the time of Isaac's birth, and (2) to announce the destruction of the cities of the plain.

When Abraham saw these men, he hastened to meet them and "bowed himself toward the ground." The Hebrew word for "bowed himself" is shachah, which is *"A verb meaning to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship"*

(Baker/Carpenter, p. 1119). This word can be used to refer to royalty, a superior, or GOD. It was also done as a matter of respect or hospitality. Was Abraham bowing in worship to the second person of the GODHEAD at this time? It does not appear that he knows before Whom he is bowing. Abraham was probably bowing as *"an expression of the self-depreciating courtesy of the Orient"* (Crawford, Vol. 3, p. 299).

Note the eagerness of Abraham to show these men hospitality (v. 3). In Romans 12:13, the apostle Paul showed Christians the necessity of showing hospitality.

> "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."

One might also note that a requirement for one to be an elder is to show hospitality.

> "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;" (1 Timothy 3:2).

An elder must not simply show hospitality but be a "lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8). Christians are further told to "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter 4:9). It was a common practice of that time to show hospitality to travelers, as there were no Starbucks, McDonalds or hotels where they could refresh themselves.

> "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2).

Since at this time Abraham did not know who these visitors were, the above passage seems appropriate.

Do angels appear in human form today as they once did to Abraham?

> *"The reference to angels does not mean that Christians should practice hospitality with the express hope of entertaining angels. It is instead another way of saying that those who show hospitality to all often gain unexpected benefits from their guests. 'You never know,' the author says, 'what hospitality might bring'"* (Lightfoot, p. 247).

Gen. 18:4-5 "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said."

> "let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on: forasmuch as ye are come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said." (ASV)

The washing of their travel-worn and dusty feet would have been the first act of hospitality shown to a visitor at that time. The offer of rest shielded from the hot sun would

naturally follow while the meal was being prepared.

This writer has received so many acts of courtesy similar to these which Abraham showed as he traveled in the east. One of the things one is often asked by a host in these lands is, *"Are you hungry?"* It seems that they look for an excuse to feed you.

The phrase "for therefore are ye come to your servant" is interesting. Note that it follows the hospitality he offered, but particularly the overall idea of these travelers refreshing themselves from their journey. It would seem that he was alluding to the privilege which was granted him to show hospitality to these strangers. It should be emphasized that at this point in time he did not know who they were.

The Bible shows that hospitality should be shown without "grudging" (1 Peter 4:9). The word "grudging" comes from γογγυσμός, which means *"a murmur, murmuring, muttering"* (Strong's, Touch Bible). One should notice in the next verse the obvious eagerness of Abraham to show hospitality to his guests without a hint of muttering about what it would cost him financially or in time.

Gen. 18:6-8 "And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

> "And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto the servant; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." (ASV)

Note the words which show Abraham's eagerness and promptness in showing these guests hospitality: "hastened," "make ready quickly," "ran," and "hasted." Further, notice that he gave his guests the best he had — fresh bread, a choice kid, butter, and milk (chalab, *"milk, sour milk, cheese,"* (Strong, Touch Bible).

Also, notice the humility of Abraham as he did not sit down with his guests to eat. Instead, "he stood by them under the tree." Here was an attitude of service — he stood near so as to meet their every need, as any good servant would do.

As shall be seen, these were heavenly beings. Why did they eat, since heavenly beings have no need of such food? Why did Jesus eat after His resurrection? Some believe that they did not actually eat (only pretended to

eat), but that is not what the text indicates. In both cases, one sees these events as an accommodation rather than a necessity. In the case of Abraham, it was not time to reveal who they were, and it would have been a breech of civility under their customs to have refused the offer. Jesus did it to relieve the anxiety which was caused by His sudden appearance among the apostles, not from His need for sustenance.

> *"Man eats, that he may live; an angel eats, to be like a man. Thus did Christ eat after his resurrection, not to supply a need of his flesh, but to convince His disciples of the reality of His body"* (Augustine, quoted by JFB from Gerlach).

Gen. 18:9-10 "And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him."

> "And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And He said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him." (ASV)

Abraham had shown these visitors all of the hospitality normally seen in the east. Apparently after the meal, these visitors approached Abraham about his wife. In reading a number of commentaries, it was observed that in those times, a man did not ask about the wife of another man. Not only did they inquire about her, but they also her name. Remember that these were strangers. Abraham had not seen them before (at least not in this form). This should have tipped Abraham off immediately that these were "super human beings."

Where was Sarah? In the tent. This again was to be expected in that culture and even in many eastern cultures today. In their culture, the woman would have remained out of sight of their visitors, especially male visitors. For her to be in their presence would have been a breech of good moral conduct.

In verse ten, the Lord stated that He would return to them "according to the time of life." This phrase can mean one of two things. Either (1) it refers to nine months from this time, which would be the normal time for a woman to conceive and give birth, or (2) it means a year from this time. Most scholars believe it means a year from this time. The promise which had been given to them regarding a future son was then repeated, except now there is a shade of difference — the time is right for it to happen now.

GOD had made Abraham a promise many years before this time, even though Sarah was barren (sterile). Now she

had apparently reached a point in life where her change had taken place. In the human mind, what was said on this occasion was absolutely impossible. Moffit makes the observation that *"God permits impossible situations to develop"* (p. 239). Why would GOD do such a thing? It would seem to this writer that GOD has often used what seems impossible to the human mind to reveal Himself in all His power. By doing so, He reminds one of how much greater He is compared to lowly man. He can do what normally is impossible!

Sarah was eavesdropping behind the tent "door," which seems to be behind their visitors. Coffman says this is the *"privilege of good wives in all generations"* (p. 239).

Gen. 18:11-12 "Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

> "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (ASV)

The first thing one is told in these verses is that both Abraham and Sarah "were old and well stricken in age"

> The word "old" comes from zaqen, which Strong states is *"old (of humans), elder (of those having authority)"* (Touch Bible); Baker/Carpenter say it is *"An adjective meaning elder, old, aged, old man, old woman (as a noun), leader(s). The word's basic meaning is old or aged. But from this basic meaning, several different meanings arise. The word means aged person, but the ideas of dignity, rank, and privilege also become attached to this concept"* (p. 300).

Zodhiates also informs one that in the Septuagint, the word here is *"presbúteros,"* which in the New Testament refers to those men who serve in the eldership. The point is, according to human thinking and natural law, Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children.

How did Sarah react to the Lord's statement? She laughed. Remember that at this point, she did not know who these "men" were. Note the following comments by Morris.

> *"When Sarah heard this promise, she 'laughed within herself,' not a laugh of joy as earlier with Abraham (17:17), but a cynical laugh, knowing that it was impossible for her and her husband any longer to enjoy the pleasures of sexual relations or of child-bearing"* (p. 340).

The word "pleasure" comes from eden.

Strong says this means *"luxury, dainty, delight, finery"* (Touch Bible), and Baker/Carpenter say it is *"A masculine noun referring to luxury, a pleasure, a delight. Used in the plural, it means luxury, luxurious things; figuratively of the many splendid things and enjoyments God gives"* (p. 808).

To a woman of that time, nothing could be more joyous than having a male child. Because the human mind says such a conception is impossible, Sarah "laughed within herself" or, as might be said today, *"to herself."* *"Capacity for procreation and conception was extinct"* (Leupold, p. 541). Regarding Sarah's laughter, Leupold went on to say, *"This laughter on Sarah's part was the laughter of incredulity and so a form of unbelief. It bore no trace of scoffing"* (IBID). Clarke thinks she was reacting as one might today at such good news, i.e., *"The news is too good to be true"* (p. 119).

Gen. 18:13-14 "And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

"And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? Is anything too hard for Jehovah? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son." (ASV)

Two questions were then asked by the Lord. The first one continues to reveal the identity of the speaker — He is GOD; He is the Lord. Her laugh had been silent — to herself, but this visitor knew her innermost reaction to the promise. Further, the visitor revealed why she had laughed. Her question was one filled with doubt.

The second question is one of the greatest questions to be contemplated in the Bible. "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"

"Behold, I am the LORD, the GOD of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:27).

A good answer to this question is found in the words of Jesus: "with GOD all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). This is the GOD who created all things simply by speaking. The One who had power to create all things surely had the power to open the womb of one He had created, no matter how old she was.

Is there anything which it is impossible for GOD to do? The answer is yes. He cannot do anything which is inconsistent with His nature. Example: Can GOD lie or steal, et cetera? Obviously, the answer is no!

GOD again repeated His promise. Abraham and Sarah

would have a male child in the next year.

Gen. 18:15 "Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And He said, Nay; but thou didst laugh."

> "Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And He said, Nay; but thou didst laugh." (ASV)

The obvious thing about this passage is the denial of Sarah. The word "denied" comes from the Hebrew kahas.

> Strong says it means *"to deceive, lie, fail, grow lean, be disappointing, be untrue, be insufficient, be found liars, belie, deny, dissemble, deal falsely"* (Touch Bible). Baker/Carpenter say it is *"A verb meaning to lie, to cringe, to deny. It means to deal falsely about something or with someone, the opposite of being truthful, honest"* (p. 503).

Why would she deny that she laughed? Since she had laughed to herself, she might think that no one could know, and therefore she would not be corrected. But the simple answer is that she was afraid.

> *"When something as incredible as this is declared, the human response is consistent: like Sarah, people are taken off guard, laugh, and then out of fear deny that they laughed"* (Cook, p. 59).

It seems to this writer that when GOD said, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord," that that was when she realized their guest was more than a simple man. Thus, fear and a denial.

It is recalled that Abraham also laughed, but he was not rebuked for his laughter. Obviously, there was a difference between Abraham's laughter and that of Sarah. Abraham's laughter was one of joy and expectation of the long-desired child GOD had promised them. Sarah's laughter was a denial of GOD's promise — a laugh of unbelief. Anytime man does not believe GOD's word, he is guilty of the same sin as was Sarah.

Note GOD's rebuke of Sarah. He did not go into a long dissertation on faith, but very simply told her she lied. Blunt, to the point — *"Sarah, you just lied."* It is also noted that she did not lie a second time. She took the rebuke as she should have.

Gen. 18:16-18 "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

> "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; seeing that Abraham had surely become a great and mighty

nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" (ASV)

The rest of this chapter is very different from the first part of the chapter. Instead of blessings promised, one finds promised destruction. Here foretold is the destruction of the cities of the plain for their many sins. Had these cities been warned about their sins? With "just Lot" (2 Peter 2:7) living among them, there is no doubt that he had spoken to them about their sins. One cannot be just and fail to warn sinners of judgment to come. Further, as Morris pointed out, they had seen the power of GOD demonstrated through Abraham when they were rescued from the kings of the east (p. 341).

Part of the hospitality of that time was to see a guest forward on his journey. This was usually done by escorting him for a short distance. One can see this practice during the times of the New Testament as well. An example of such is in Acts 20:38, where the brethren "accompanied him unto the ship" on Paul's journey to Jerusalem. This practice has further been seen by this author every time he has traveled to the east. His host has always gone with him to the airport to see him off, even though he could have taken a taxi.

Why did GOD tell Abraham what He was going to do? There seem to be three reasons given: (1) The descendants of Abraham would be a mighty nation, (2) All the nations of the earth would be blessed by the descendant who would come from Abraham — Jesus Christ, and (3) He knew Abraham would faithfully raise his household in faithfulness to the Lord (v. 19). Being the friend of someone usually means that things are shared between them. Abraham is a "friend of GOD" (James 2:23), therefore GOD confides His intentions to Abraham. It should be remembered that his beloved nephew lived in one of these cities, therefore Abraham had a vested interest in what happened there. But it should also be noticed that Abraham did not just care about his relatives — he also cared about the other inhabitants of these cities.

Gen. 18:19 "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him."

"For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." (ASV)

GOD now stated why Abraham would be a blessing to

all nations. He says, "I know him." The word know comes from yada.

> Zodhiates says the word means *"to perceive, understand, acquire knowledge, know, discern"* (CD), and Baker/Carpenter says it is *"A verb meaning to know, to learn, to perceive, to discern, to experience, to confess, to consider, to know people relationally, to know how, to be skillful, to be made known, to make oneself known, to make known"* (p. 420).

As seen above, the word carries a broad spectrum of meanings. It is obvious from a study of the Scriptures that GOD knows everything about man. He knows each individual; He understands each individual. What did He know about Abraham?

GOD knew that Abraham would "command" his children and household to follow GOD's directions.

> To "command" is to *"constitute, make firm, establish; to appoint anyone over anything"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to order, to direct, to appoint, to command, to charge, to be ordered, to be commanded"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 942).

Abraham would see to it that those in his household knew GOD's will. He knew that Abraham would guide them to understand that GOD was just in His judgments. After these cities were destroyed, Abraham would be able to tell people why and Who caused this destruction. Divine justice would cause this destruction based on the sins of these people and their refusal to turn away from them. It would also seem that this would be a lesson to the people as to why they should walk justly.

> *"The destruction of Sodom and the surrounding cities was to be a permanent memorial of the punitive righteousness of God, and to keep the fate of the ungodly constantly before the mind of Israel"* (Keil-Delitzsch, Vol. 1, p. 230).

Careful note should be made of the phrase "the way of the Lord."

> Dugger says verse nineteen *"declares the existence of a divine pattern. The Lord has a 'way' for men to follow (Heb. 8:5). It is a sufficient way (2 Tim. 3:16-17), a saving way (James 1:21, a complete and perfect way (James 1:25), a loving way (John 14:15), a narrow and difficult way (Matt. 7:13-14), and a heavenly way (2 Pet. 1:10-11)"* (p. 226).

Note something which is almost completely overlooked by commentators in this passage — "that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Would GOD give Abraham and Sarah a son no matter what they did? Would He cause Abraham to be a blessing to all nations if he committed unrighteousness? GOD's

blessings would be upon Abraham because he faithfully instructed his children and household. When the promise to Abraham was finally fulfilled many centuries later, through whom was it fulfilled and what were their characters? Jesus' step-father is called a "just" man (Matthew 1:19). Of His mother, the Scriptures say she was "highly favored...fear not Mary: for thou hast found favor with GOD" (Luke 1:28, 30).

Gen. 18:20-21 "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know."

> "And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know." (ASV)

"Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great" The NKJV reads, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great." Who made this cry against them? Was it the land which cried out because of the sins of these people? Job speaks of the land crying against him, i.e., making an accusation against him (Job 31:38). Was it godly men like Abraham and Lot who diligently cried out to GOD about these sins? Was it those who had suffered as righteous men, even being put to death by the ungodly (Revelation 6:9)? Could it be the angels of GOD which had reported these things to Him? However the report came to GOD, He was told that their sins were "very grievous" [kavedh — *"to be heavy, be weighty"* (Zodhiates, CD)].

"I will go down now..." Are there things that GOD does not know unless He leaves Heaven and personally investigates them? No. GOD knows everything and does not need to leave His throne to make a judgment. Why then did GOD (the Son) make this journey with two angels? What if GOD without any explanation had simply wiped these cities and their inhabitants off of the face of the earth? Would there be an understanding of the justice of GOD by man? This text shows that GOD gave these cities ample time to repent. They even had a man of GOD among them who no doubt tried to get them to repent. GOD is absolutely just in condemning sinners to drastic punishment.

> *"The justice and fairness of any authority making such an investigation before the execution of drastic penalties is indicated here, reflecting a revelation concerning the justice and fairness of God himself"* (Coffman, p. 243).

Gen. 18:22 "And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD."

> "And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah." (ASV)

One might note that the two "men" are described with a male designation. These angels appeared as men, so they were called men. That these two "men" were angels is quite obvious in the next chapter. One might also note that the angels of Heaven are always described as male, just as the GODHEAD is always described as being male. This fact troubles the women's liberation movement to the point of causing them by necessity to deny the Bible.

While the two angels left for their mission in Sodom, the Lord remained behind, as is evidenced by the fact that Abraham "stood yet before the Lord." Before whom was Abraham standing? The original clearly shows that he was standing before deity — YEHOWAH. Originally, the spelling for this word was YHWH. One notices that there were no vowels — vowels were added later. Without the vowels, this word YHWH could not be pronounced.

> *"Until the Renaissance, it was written without vowels in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, being rendered as YHWH"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 426).

Why did Abraham continue to remain in the Lord's presence? Why did the Lord stay with him when He had already told Abraham what He was going to do to these cities? The answer is seen in the opportunity GOD gave Abraham to show a desire for mercy.

Gen. 18:23-25 "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt Thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

> "And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt Thou consume the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there are fifty righteous within the city: wilt Thou consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from Thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (ASV)

"destroy" — sapah — *"A verb meaning to scape or sweep away, to destroy, to perish, to be captured. The word refers to to destruction or sweeping away of people; or a city; especially as the judgment of God"* (Baker/Carpenter,

p. 786); *"To scrape, scrape away, scrape off...The main picture evoked by RaMphaMh is collecting something into a heap and then sweeping it away"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"Sweep or snatch away, catch up"* (Bauer, p. 705).

"righteous" — saddiyq — *"An adjective meaning just, righteous. The term bears primarily a moral or ethical significance. Someone or something is considered to be just or righteous because of conformity to a given standard"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 937); *"It means just, lawful, righteous, honest, right"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"wicked" — rasa — *"An adjective meaning wicked, guilty, in the wrong, criminal, transgressor"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1080); *"It means (morally) wrong, bad, wicked, unrighteous"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"One guilty of crime, deserving punishment"* (Bauer, p. 957).

Verse twenty-three appears to be the foundation upon which Abraham made his appeal to GOD for the inhabitants of these cities. Abraham's appeal is based on the justice of GOD. Abraham did not appeal for the salvation of the wicked of these cities, for he knew that they deserved the punishment GOD intended to inflict upon them. Instead, he appealed for salvation for those who had been obeying GOD's standards for morality. Thus, for the sake of the righteous in these cities, he petitioned GOD to spare them. It should be noted that Abraham's petition was granted, but not in the way he thought it would — the righteous would gain salvation.

One should consider the power of GOD as portrayed here. The word "destroy" (see definitions above) is a word picture of one's sweeping something away. It might be compared to how easily one takes a broom and sweeps away the dust at his feet. GOD would just as easily destroy these cities from the land.

One of the things which should be pointed out here is that there are only two classes of people. GOD does not see anything except righteous or wicked people. Man wants to see at least one more classification of people — one that is somewhere between right and wrong (a gray area, if you please). But note that throughout the Bible, no such distinction is made. Note that there are only two gates which lead to eternity through which one may pass — narrow or wide (Matthew 7:13). There are only two ways which lead to eternity — a broad way and a narrow way (Matthew 7:14).

> "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Corinthians 10:21). Note: there is no third cup. One drinks from one or the other.

"He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30).

One is either on the Lord's side or the Devil's side — he cannot serve either on a part-time basis. One either scatters or gathers.

One of the things this writer wishes to ponder is a question: Do we love **wicked** souls the way Abraham did? Note that Abraham did not simply pray that the righteous souls in these cities would be spared this destruction. He prayed that everyone in these cities would be spared because of the righteous ones who lived there. It would seem that he was highly interested in the wicked, possibly with the hope that they would yet learn the error of their ways and respond in penitence to GOD's love and mercy. Do we plead with GOD for the lost as Abraham apparently did? As GOD's people, one should remember Ezekiel 33:11.

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

One should also be aware that though GOD does not desire the death of the wicked, there is a time when His patience will be replaced with wrath. This is extremely evident when one looks at the account of the flood.

"God is love (1 John 4:8), but because He loves holiness and truth, He is also just (Psalm 89:14; 145:17). His judgments are (1) according to truth (Rev. 19:2); (2) universal and certain (Rom. 2:6); (3) impersonal and impartial (Rom. 2:11); (4) concerned with motive as well as outward conduct (Rom. 2:16; Luke 12:2, 3)" (Crawford, Vol. 3, p. 313).

One should note how humbly (v. 27) and yet boldly Abraham addressed GOD. Should not all of GOD's people be able to approach GOD in this manner?

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of GOD, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

In his petition, Abraham started by asking that the cities be spared if fifty righteous souls could be found in them. This section ends with a question which this writer believes is a statement rather than a question. "Shall not the judge

of all the earth do right?" Further, note that Abraham understood that GOD does not rule over one group of people (family). He is the GOD of all people (the whole earth).

Gen. 18:26-32 "And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt Thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And He said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto Him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And He said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And He said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

> "And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes: peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt Thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And He said, I will not destroy it, if I find there forty and five. And he spake unto Him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And He said, I will not do it for the forty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And He said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake" (ASV).

GOD answered Abraham's question by saying that He would indeed spare the city if fifty righteous souls could be found. Remember that this would appear to be fifty souls in the combined cities, as they all were to be destroyed.

Many have looked at this section and deduced that Abraham was bargaining with GOD. But bargaining entails one's saying he will do something if the other person does something in return. For instance, bargaining over the price of an item to get the lowest possible price.

> "To negotiate over the terms of a purchase, agreement, or contract" (Webster, CD).

Abraham was not "bargaining" with GOD. Instead,

Abraham was pleading for souls and opportunities for souls yet to be saved through their repentance.

Note the humility of Abraham in the words "which am but dust and ashes." He understands that in the presence of GOD, he is indeed a very lowly creature. This reminds one of the creation account where he was told that "the Lord GOD formed man of the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). Note what Job said with regard to man in Job 4:19.

> "How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?"

Finally, Abraham pleaded with GOD for salvation of these cities if only ten righteous souls could be found in them, and GOD agreed. Before setting the number, note that Abraham said, "I will speak yet but this once." Why did Abraham stop at ten? If Abraham had asked for five, would GOD have granted his request? These are questions which no living man can answer. Note that it was Abraham who stopped asking — GOD did not stop him. In Second Kings chapter thirteen, there is the account of Elisha on his death bed. He was visited by the King of Israel (Joash), who mourned that the one who had helped protect Israel was dying. In essence, he was wondering who would save Israel when Elisha is gone. Elisha instructed him to take a bow and aim it at their enemy, Syria. After firing the arrow, Elisha told Joash to take the arrows and strike the ground with them. Joash took the arrows and struck the ground with them three times and stopped. Elisha became angry with him because Joash's actions showed a lack of faith. Israel would now only be able to withstand Syria three times, whereas if he had struck the ground five or six times, Syria would have been destroyed.

> "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1John 5:14-16).

It may not have been the will of GOD to lower the number. But that will never be known, because Abraham did not ask. How many righteous men did it take for GOD to save the human race and the world? One righteous man (Genesis 6:9; 7:1).

Gen. 18:33 "And the LORD went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place."

> "And Jehovah went His way, as soon as He had left off communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place." (ASV)

Where did the Lord go? The text simply says that He "went His way." This writer believes that, since He did not appear with the two angels in Sodom, He probably returned to His place, i.e., Heaven.

Notice what the Bible said the Lord and Abraham were doing before they parted. They were "communing." The Hebrew word here is davar, which means to *"say"* or *"speak"* (Zodhiates, CD). They were having a conversation, like two good friends are wont to do.

> "Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of GOD" (James 2:23).

True friends have always been able to speak freely with one another.

Genesis Chapter Nineteen

Gen. 19:1-3 "And there came two angels to Sodom at

even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat."

> "And the two angels came to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face to the earth; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn aside, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your way. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he urged them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." (ASV)

In the present context, these men were referred to as angels (heavenly messengers). In the last chapter (verse twenty-two), they were referred to as men, as that is the form which they took for this mission with the Lord.

"Lot sat in the gate of Sodom" Why was Lot sitting at the gate of the city? The gate of the city was where many business transactions were made, so it is possible he was there simply because of his business. The gate was also the place where judgments were made by city leaders. So, it is possible that he was one of city leaders who made those decisions. It would also seem that there might be another reason he was there. Knowing the extreme sinfulness of his fellow city-dwellers, he may have gone to the gate each day for the purpose of rescuing any travelers from the sodomites. This writer believes, based on the account given and the way he "pressed" (pressured) them not to sleep in the streets, that he was very concerned for the safety of travelers under these circumstances. Further, one might remember that in the east, many times hospitality was offered to total strangers, and "just Lot" (2 Peter 2:7) would not have wanted them to accept an invitation by one of the wicked men of the city. It should be remembered that at this stage of these events, Lot had no idea who these "men" were.

Lot has greeted these angels as graciously as did Abraham. He bowed before them, thus, placing himself in an inferior position to them. He was going to be their servant. This is further evidenced in bringing them to his home for the night, where he would naturally prepare food for them. Some have made his offering of unleavened bread a matter of speculation and claim he might have been in poverty. Being late in the day and assuming as he

did that they would be leaving early, there was no time to allow yeast to do its job. It seems those who assume him to be poor have missed the word "feast" (mishteh) in the text, which refers to *"feast, drink, banquet"* (Strong).

Gen. 19:4-8 "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house around, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof."

> "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men that came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out unto them to the door, and shut the door after him. And he said, I pray you, my brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters that have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing, forasmuch as they are come under the shadow of my roof." (ASV)

In chapter eighteen (verses 20-21), it is recorded that "the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know."

In the present verses, all the proof needed to establish their wickedness will be demonstrated.

ALL the men of the city gathered around Lot's house and demanded the men who were his guests. They demanded that Lot bring these guests out so that they could "know" them. This was not a social invitation. The phrase "to know them" is a euphemism used in the Bible for sexual intercourse. The "men" of the city, young and old, wanted to have sexual relations with these "men" who were guests in Lot's house. There is little doubt that these homosexuals would probably rape these men if they could.

Lot went out to reason with these sinners. Notice that he did not cower before them, but rather preached to them — "do not so wickedly." He took the stand of GOD regarding the sins of homosexuality and lesbianism.

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination...For whosoever shall

commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people" (Leviticus 18:22, 29).

"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:13).

"For this cause GOD gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26-27).

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

When Lot said these men came "under the shadow of my roof," he spoke of an almost sacred honor which is hard for the western mind to understand.

"Hospitality was considered a sacred duty, and imposed upon a host the obligation of protecting the lives of his guests at all hazards" (JFB, Vol. 1, p. 160).

"A man who had taken a stranger under his care and protection, was bound to defend him even at the expense of his own life" (Clarke, p. 123).

While Lot had a "sacred duty" to protect those under his roof who were guests, where was his honor when he offered the men of the city his daughters for these perverts' sexual pleasure? Committing one sin of a "lesser" perversity does not justify another sin — no matter how

terrible that sin may be! One sin does not negate another sin!

In offering his daughters to these men, one cannot help but remember a similar incident in Judges nineteen. There one finds a Levite traveling home with his concubine. She had played the harlot, but he had reclaimed her. They stopped in Gibeah for the night, where an old man invited them to lodge with him. The men of the city came to this house and demanded the Levite so that they could rape him. The householder offered his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine to satisfy their cravings. When the homosexuals would not listen to them he gave them the concubine, whom they abused all night long. The next morning when the Levite was ready to leave, they found his concubine at the door dead from the abuse she had suffered. This incident led to a war in which the tribe of Benjamin was almost totally destroyed.

Gen. 19:9-11 "And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door."

> "And they said, Stand back. And they said, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and drew near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and brought Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door." (ASV)

Lot had previously pleaded with these men not to do the evil thing as they proposed. By doing this, he was condemning their sin. The KJV says that these sinners said, "he will needs be a judge." Note the way the NKJV renders this: *"he keeps acting as a judge."* The NKJV gives one a better understanding of what was taking place here. Note the tactic they seem to have been using. It is one that has often been seen in history and is still being used today. Often when people's actions are pointed out as being wrong, they will cry, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). They conveniently forget verse five of that context, where Jesus spoke about casting the mote out of their brother's eye **after** they took care of their own sins. Matthew 7:1 was talking about hypocritical judging that is not to be done.

Further, the NKJV gives a clearer indication that this

was not the first time Lot had condemned their sins. But they have finally had enough of his "judging" them. It should be kept in mind that Lot was **NOT** judging these people, that is by his own authority. When men state what GOD has said about any sin, it needs to be understood that GOD is the One who made the judgment, not the individual repeating His judgment. Just here, let one contemplate the question as to why these people were so steeped in these sins.

> "Because that, when they knew GOD, they glorified him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:21-22).

One should note that the Sodomites rejected Lot's offer in no uncertain terms. These men rejected the women, demanding males instead to fulfill their sinful desires. Now they threatened to do to Lot (rape) what they had formerly only intended for his visitors and even say they will treat him worse than they had intended to treat his visitors.

It should also be pointed out that one is taught a valuable lesson here. Even though Lot made a mistake in moving to this city wholly given over to sin, he kept his faith to this point in time. One can be faithful to GOD in spite of being surrounded by evil. My fellow American Christians, even though you are surrounded in this land with the constant drum beat of sinful people — WE CAN BE FAITHFUL TO GOD! One does not have to give in to the sin which surrounds him. That sin will vex (*"To torture...to be harassed, distressed, of those who at sea are struggling with a head wind"* – Strong) Christians as it did Lot. Reliance upon GOD's word and obedience to it will bring GOD's deliverance.

> "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)" (2 Peter 2:7-8).

But, it should also be remembered, that like Lot, one has a responsibility to point out the sins people are doing regardless of their threats.

Lot was delivered from these evil men by the angels who pulled him back into the house. The second action of the angels was to cause these men to become blind. Is this literal, physical blindness?

> *"This was not actually blindness, in the ordinary sense, as proved by a glance at 2 Kings 6:18, where the only other use of this word in the entire Bible is found. 'There God smote the Syrian army with blindness, but did not leave them sightless. It was blindness of confusion...they could see but could not*

identify where they were.'" (Coffman, p. 251).

> *"What is involved here is not the common affliction, not just 'total blindness,' but a sudden stroke...a blinding flash emanating from angels — who thereby abandoned their human disguise — which would induce immediate, if temporary, loss of sight, much like the desert or snow blindness"* (Crawford, Vol. 3, p. 339).

No matter how they were blinded, the result is the same. These evil men could not see to find Lot's door and therefore could not fulfill their threats against him and his guests.

Side note: This writer has a friend who was raped by a homosexual when he was a young boy. As the years went by, he had many sexual liaisons with women, even though he knew it was wrong. But he did not understand why he did that which was wrong until recent years. He now understands that during that time of his life, he had these liaisons because he was trying to prove that he was a man. What a heart ache this man has suffered because of those who try to push their abhorrent life-style on others. If one will pay attention, he can easily see that the homosexuals in America have been successfully pushing their life-style (perversion) on America. One can only wonder how long it will be before GOD in His providence will hold America accountable for allowing this to happen.

Gen. 19:12-14 "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law."

> "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whomsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of the place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxed great before Jehovah: and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, who married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for Jehovah will destroy the city. But he seemed unto his sons-in-law as one that mocked." (ASV)

Lot went to his "sons-in-law" to try and get them to leave the city as the angel instructed. But they refused, thinking that Lot was jesting ("mocked" — "a huge joke," Crawford, Vol. 1, p. 564). Note that the angels had asked Lot about

relatives here, and had specifically spoken of sons, daughters, and sons-in-law. It would seem that he might have had more than the two daughters living in his house. If this were so, their answer was the same as that of the sons-in-law.

Regarding the word "sons-in-law," one should keep in mind that this may refer to the fiance's of the two daughters living at home. During the time that moderns would refer to as an engagement, the couple were also referred to as being married. In all points of law they were — except they were not allowed to live together or have marital relations with each other.

When one looks at this account, there appears a very serious and sad lesson to be learned. It should be remembered that GOD had previously said that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Genesis 13:13, emphasis mine, RK). There is no way, in this writer's opinion, that Lot could have not known what kind of people these were before he initially moved closer to them and later within their gates. The New Testament calls Lot a "righteous" man, yet all of the time he was there he was never able to convert anyone to follow GOD. Further, when he left, some of his own family had become corrupted enough to be left behind — he even lost his wife.

From this, one should learn that some people are so wicked that they will never turn to GOD. Surely Lot would have realized this before the destruction of the text came. Why did he not move once he realized he could not change these people into GOD-fearing people?

> As Jesus pointed out, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6).
>
> He further said, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matthew 10:14).

There is a time when no progress is being made that one should leave that place and seek more fertile ground in which to sow GOD's message. Sometimes, Christian, you need to stop deluding yourself into false hope for the lost.

Another interesting thought is that, at the last minute, these relatives of Lot were warned of the destruction which would follow. But even at the last minute, they would not heed the call of salvation.

> "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven,

and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:28-29).

Man has a long history of mocking GOD's pronouncement of judgment to come.

> "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:3-7).

Gen. 19:15-17 "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

> "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters that are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. But he lingered; and the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, Jehovah being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (ASV)

It was probably early in the morning that the angels "hastened Lot" to leave. The word "Hastened" is from uwts which is *"to press, be pressed, make haste, urge, be narrow...to urge, to insist"* (Strong). The angels were impressing upon Lot the urgency of getting away from the doomed cities and the entire plain.

Even though by now he knew who these "men" were and Whom they represented, Lot "lingered." The verb "lingered" is from mahahh, which is *"to linger, tarry, wait, delay"* (Strong); *"A verb meaning to tarry, to hesitate, to linger. It means to delay doing something"* (Baker/ Carpenter, p. 575). The question could be asked as to why Lot lingered. Was it because he knew that soon there would never be any hope for the souls in this city? Was it

because he knew that some of his relatives were soon to be so lost? Was it because he knew he was soon to lose every material thing he had? Or maybe a bit of all of the above? Whatever caused him to hesitate, to delay, the angels had to take him, his wife, and two daughters by the hand and place them outside the walls of the city.

> "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

Their hesitation could have resulted in their being destroyed with all of these evil inhabitants.

It was GOD's mercy which provided Lot a way of escape. It is GOD's mercy which provides a way for any sinful man to escape sin and its consequences.

> "I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation" (Psalm 13:5).

> "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about" (Psalm 32:10).

> "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee" (Psalm 86:5).

> "The earth, O LORD, is full of Thy mercy: teach me Thy statutes" (Psalm 119:64).

The angels warned them not to look back as they fled. This is a warning for all who are spared from sin and its consequences. Once one has been freed from sin, do not look wistfully behind at it, do not turn to it like the dog who "...is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:22). Further, there is a lesson to learn about leaving behind anything which would hinder one from escaping eternal destruction. Whether it is family, friends, material things — whatever it is — it is worth losing to save one's soul. This writer saw a question asked somewhere that basically said, If today some disaster took every physical thing you owned except the clothes on your back, and someone asked you what do you have left, would your answer be nothing? If one's answer is "nothing," he is wrong, and the material world apparently has a hold on him. The Lord said that one soul is worth more than the entire world.

> "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (Mark 8:36)?

One should be like Job who, after everything he had was taken away, "fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD

hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged GOD foolishly" (Job 1:20-22).

Gen. 19:18-22 "And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar."

> "And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my lord: behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy lovingkindness, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest evil overtake me, and I die: behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh let me escape thither (is it not a little one?), and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar." (ASV)

Outside of Sodom, Lot pleaded that he would not have to go all the way to the mountains to escape the destruction. Why he thought he could not make it to the mountains is a mystery, because one sees him leaving Zoar and going to the mountains because of fear (apparently fear of its destruction). His petition was granted. One might remember just here that there were five cities of the plain — Sodom, Gomorrah, Zoar, Admah, and Zeboim.

Lot had been shown grace in being saved from this city. GOD could just as easily have destroyed Lot there. But GOD granted mercy and grace unto him. Could not this same GOD have preserved Lot from evil in going to the mountain? How easily man seems to forget what GOD has done for him in the past.

One of the things to notice here is that, when Abraham pleaded for these cities, he pleaded not for the cities but for the souls in those cities (Genesis 18:23ff). Go back a little, and one remembers the separation of Lot and Abraham, where Lot was given the choice (Genesis 13). Lot's choice at that time did not appear to be based on what was spiritually best but was rather out of selfishness. In the present text, his plea is not for the inhabitants of the city, but for his own personal comfort in not having to go so far away.

One should also notice from the words of the angel, as indicated in verse twenty-one, that the city Lot asked for was also slated for destruction until Lot pleaded for safety there. Lot said the city was "a little one." The name "Zoar" has been interpreted as *"tiny place"* (Leupold, Vol. 1, p. 567) and *"insignificance"* (Strong).

It is also seen that these cities could not be destroyed until Lot and those with him were safe. It would seem that Abraham's question was answered with regard to GOD's justness. "Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" This writer cannot help but wonder, if Abraham had not asked GOD for the life of the righteous, would Lot have survived this destruction?

Gen. 19:23-25 "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."

> "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot came unto Zoar. Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." (ASV)

The repetition of the word LORD (Jehovah – ASV) in verse twenty-four seems to be a double emphasis which shows that GOD did this. If this assessment is correct, then this flies in the face of those who are always looking for natural means to explain what happened to these cities.

After Lot got to Zoar, GOD rained brimstone (sulfur) and fire down from Heaven in order to destroy these cities. Those who wish to ignore the natural and easy understanding of the words of this verse say this must have been sulfur which came up out of the ground and gases which were then ignited by lightning. There is nothing in this text which indicates such a thing. GOD sent this punishment from His throne.

The brimstone and fire did not simply light upon the cities themselves, but on all of the plain as well. Every living thing, whether it were people, animals, or vegetation was utterly destroyed. Further, the material substances were destroyed. This writer has wondered something as he studied this text. Has the water always been there which is called the Dead Sea? If it has, was it fresh water with an outlet before this destruction? Did a river run through this area before the destruction of this plain which then caused the Dead Sea to come into existence (with no outlet)? Where did the water for the "well watered" plains come from in Genesis 13:10? If some reader has come across information on this, this writer would love to hear

from him.

Genesis 19:26 "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (ASV)

As Lot, his wife, and two daughters fled Sodom, the text states that Mrs. Lot violated the angels' commands not to look back. What was it which caused Mrs. Lot to look back at this city? No one today knows the answer to this question. There have been speculations. What is known is that Jesus made reference to her in Luke 17:32 — "Remember Lot's wife." There the context spoke about judgment and how swift it will be upon an unsuspecting world. The judgment spoken of was the destruction of Jerusalem. They were warned that, when the opportunity to flee came, they were to leave their stuff behind — flee now! It would be better to escape with only the clothes on one's back than to be destroyed.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

It would seem to this writer that she did not want to leave the life she had there behind — her things, et cetera. Is there a lesson here about backsliding? It is possible. As a Christian, one has left the world (worldliness) behind him to walk toward the safety of Heaven in order to escape eternal destruction. Do not turn back. Do not let a desire for something in this world cause you to lose your soul.

"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of GOD" (Luke 9:62).

The following is an interesting outline on lessons which can be learned by remembering Lot's wife (Luke 17:32).

"I. She is a warning to all who are tempted to sacrifice their safety in order to win or keep more of this world's goods.

II. If we strive to possess the best of both worlds, we are likely to lose both.

III. She is a reminder that being 'near safety' is not enough.

IV. She is a warning that having begun to follow the Lord's word one may still turn back from the way and be lost" (Coffman, p. 257).

Gen. 19:27-28 "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

"And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where

he had stood before Jehovah: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the Plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace." (ASV)

Abraham had petitioned GOD on behalf of the cities of the plain (18:20-33). Now he wanted to know if his prayer had been answered. His getting up early in the morning suggests his intense interest in learning what had happened.

It would seem to this writer that Abraham had been fairly confident that there would have been at least ten righteous people in these cities. Therefore, what he saw must have saddened him — "the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." This was the evidence that GOD had not found even ten and had destroyed these cities. To a man of GOD, there would be no happiness that these people had been destroyed, i.e., he would not gloat over such. His desire had been that they should be saved. On the other hand, Abraham would acknowledge that their punishment was just.

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him" (Proverbs 24:17-18).

"they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of My counsel: they despised all of My reproof" (Proverbs 1:29-30).

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after GOD: GOD is not in all his thoughts" (Proverbs 10:4).

Gen. 19:29 "And it came to pass, when GOD destroyed the cities of the plain, that GOD remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

"And it came to pass, when GOD destroyed the cities of the Plain, that GOD remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt." (ASV)

Abraham had petitioned GOD for all of the people of these cities, by appealing to a low number of righteous people within these cities. Ten righteous souls could not be found in them — so GOD destroyed the cities. But before He did so, through the hands of the angels, He brought Lot and part of his family out of Sodom.

"Here God's care and love for Abraham can be observed by his sending his nephew Lot out of the destruction" (Zerr, p. 40).

Consider that the cities of the plain are thought by most scholars to have been cities of fair size. Yet, only three souls out of all that number escaped destruction. Back in time, the earth had been populated by hundreds of millions; yet, only eight souls escaped the destruction of the flood. Jesus warned of a coming destruction and declared that few would find their way through the gate which leads to salvation. The vast majority will be lost.

> "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

If one today looked back to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., he would see the same thing. Only those who heeded Jesus' warnings escaped destruction when Jerusalem fell.

> "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains" (Matthew 24:15-16).

All of these are examples which show that all through history, the majority will not heed GOD's Word.

Gen. 19:30 "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters."

> "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters." (ASV)

Here one sees a possible flaw in Lot. Why did he flee to the mountain? Because he was afraid to stay in Zoar. Why was he afraid to stay in Zoar? There seem to be two possible answers. (1) Because he was afraid its evil association would further corrupt what was left of his family. Once there, he may have seen that the people were no different from the inhabitants of Sodom, so they might soon have the same destruction fall upon them. He would probably remember that they had only been spared because of his plea for a safe place to go. (2) A lack of trust in GOD's promise to spare the city at Lot's request. The question might also be raised, if he were going to flee anywhere, why did he not go to Abraham? It would seem to this writer that the second is probably the answer to his flight to the mountains.

Another question which cannot be answered, but should nevertheless be considered here: How long did he reside

in Zoar before fleeing to the mountain? Did he stay long enough to develop business dealings? If not, since he lost everything in Sodom, where did the funds come from for the wine he drank later? Considering that, one should also observe that the time he lived in the cave is unknown, and therefore the time-frame for the events of the next few verses is unknown, compared to when he had fled the plain, or even Zoar.

Gen. 19:31-35 "And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose."

> "And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose." (ASV)

Verse thirty-one is an old argument used by man to accomplish his desires — *"The end justifies the means."* The older daughter instigated the actions in these verses. She proposed that they get their father drunk (intoxicated). It seems she realized that alcoholic beverages would cause a person to do what he would not do if he were sober. Alcohol has been the ruin of many a man and woman. Even the smallest amount of it begins to take away one's control center in the brain — thus, causing his judgment to be flawed.

> *"Lot, whose temperance and chastity were impregnable against the batteries of foreign force, was surprised into sin and shame by the base treachery of his own daughters: we must dread a*

snare wherever we are, and be always upon our guard" (Henry, p. 39).

One should consider the chaste way these daughters had lived in a totally immoral society — they were both virgins. It would seem that it was not a mere whim or lust which caused them to have sex with their father. They reasoned that there was "not a man in the earth" for them to mate with. Therefore, to jump to the conclusion that they had become immoral due to the influence of Sodom is not justifiable. It would seem that their actions are judged by 2017 standards. Nevertheless, their actions would be a demonstration from which GOD's people could learn in the future. Further, it is obvious that they believed their father would not agree with their plan — thus the need to get him intoxicated.

In mentioning time in the last segment of this commentary, it would seem to this writer that some amount of time might have passed between the time of fleeing from Zoar until these events. Perhaps some time had passed, and they saw no other human beings and thought they were the only ones left on the earth — like Noah and his family.

In reasoning with her younger sister, the oldest daughter used a reason to persuade her which is interesting. She actually used two reasons: (1) There is no one to be our husband, (2) "that we may preserve seed to our father." Keeping a lineage going was very important to ancient people, and especially to the Hebrews because of the Messiah's eventual appearance. Could it be that they had a false concept that they might be in the lineage, failing to realize that the promise was made to Abraham, not Lot?

What does it mean when one is told that Lot "perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose?" Does it mean Lot was "unconscious," or is it referring to time without a clear understanding of what he was doing (that these were his daughters)? The word "when" is a time word, i.e., *"at what time"* (Webster). Being in a closed environment at night without vision of the stars and moon would have caused Lot not to know the time when his daughters came in to him.

Today, one calls what these sisters and Lot did incest. It is called incest, and rational human beings shrink away from it based on newer knowledge (Mosaic law), modern law, and genetics. But Morris makes an interesting observation, and his words are given for consideration.

"There were as yet no actual Scriptural ordinances against incest, and close marriages were not uncommon (e.g., Abram and his half-sister Sarai); so this could not have seemed as serious a crime to them as it would to us today" (p. 358).

Gen. 19:36-38 "Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day."

> "Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day." (ASV)

Both of Lot's daughters had sons by him. They are named Moab and Ben-ammi. "Moab" has been interpreted as *"of the father"* (Clarke, p. 128), *"the waters of the father"* (Calmet), *"from father"* (Cook, p. 61), *"from the father"* (Keil-Delitsch, p. 238). "Ben-ammi" has been variously interpreted as *"the son of my people"* (Clarke, p. 128), *"son of my kinsman"* (Cook, p. 61).

Lot disappears from the historical account after this chapter. But his descendants through his daughters appear later as the enemies of Israel, who brought much harm to GOD's people. Yet, interestingly enough, one of the children of Moab would play an important part in the coming of the Messiah — Ruth, the Moabitess.

Genesis — Chapter Twenty

Gen. 20:1 "And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar."

> "And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the land of the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur. And he sojourned in Gerar." (ASV)

Curious soul that man is, he wonders why Abraham moved at this time. The fact is that one does not and cannot know why he made this move. There are a number of speculations which follow. Clarke speculates that he might not have been able to stand living in a place where he could see the devastation which had taken place in Sodom and Gomorrah. *"Aalders speculates that it was because of an influx of Hittites into the area of Hebron"* (Smith, p. 154). Henry thinks it could have something to do with the reproach of the Canaanites for him and his religion because of Lot's impregnating his daughters. Another speculation is that he was simply a wanderer who was seeking better pastures for his flocks and herds.

From Genesis 13:18, one knows that Abraham had made his home in "Mamre which is in Hebron." The "south country" is what is known as the Negeb (also known as Negev), which means *"south."*

Negeb — *"It comprised a considerable but irregular shaped region stretching from the mountains and lowland of Judah on the north, to the mountains of the Azazimeh on the south and from the Dead Sea and southern Ghor on the east, to the Mediterranean on the west"* (JFB, p. 165).

The place to which Abraham now moved was Gerar. *"A Philistine city on the border between the Promised Land and Egypt, about ten miles south of Gaza"* (MacArthur, p. 42). Gerar (from archaeological excavations) appears to have been a major trade city on a trade route used by a number of nations. It was also a Philistine city, whose inhabitants would have been from the lineage of Ham (Genesis 10:6-14). The Philistines are generally believed to have migrated from the island of Crete and are sometimes called "the people of the sea."

"T.C. Mitchell of the British Museum assures us that this was: 'A Philistine city, identified with Tell Abu Hureira, a mound about 11 miles SE of Gaza. It was populated during every period of the Bronze and Iron Ages, with indications of a prosperous period during the Middle Bronze Age, the age of the patriarchs'" (Coffman p. 263).

Gen. 20:2-3 "And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But GOD came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife."

"And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. And Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But GOD came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, because of the woman whom thou hast taken. For she is a man's wife." (ASV)

Abraham loses faith again and lied about his relationship to Sarah. One would think he would have learned his lesson after the events of chapter twelve, where he had committed the same sin. But then, before judging him too harshly, one should look at how many times he has committed the same sin a second, third or more times. This time he lied to Abimelech, king of Gerar. Also note that though one returns to a sin, there is still hope, as is evidenced by Abraham's future acceptance by GOD.

"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the LORD our GOD" (Jeremiah 3:22).

Whenever man truly repents and asks for forgiveness, GOD will forgive him and welcome him back into the fold.

Sarah would have been around ninety years old at this time, and yet she appears to be very desirable to Abimelech. Did he desire her because of beauty, or was it

in order to create an alliance with Abraham? He sent for her, intending to make her one of his wives. But GOD intervened to protect Sarah from herself and Abraham. Remember she made no objection to the deception of Abraham. GOD let Abimelech know in a dream that he had committed a sin in taking another man's wife. In America today, it is not at all uncommon for men (and women) to commit this great sin — enticing and stealing another's mate. The extent of how bad this sin is is seen in the fact that GOD told Abimelech that he was a dead man because of this. As will be seen, he took Sarah in ignorance — but ignorance is no excuse with GOD. Note what Israel was told to do if she committed a sin unknowingly.

> "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering" (Leviticus 4:1-3).

Note that a sin offering was to be made for unknown sins once discovered. Why? Because without such, GOD's anger would be kindled, and the man could not stand justified in GOD's sight. Note that one's understanding is darkened, and he is alienated from GOD by his ignorance.

> "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of GOD through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18, emphasis mine, RK).

From these passages, one should learn that ignorance of sin is still a sin.

Gen. 20:4-6 "But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt Thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And GOD said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against Me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."

> "Now Abimelech had not come near her. And he said, Lord, wilt Thou slay even a righteous nation? Said he not himself unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said, He is my brother. In the integrity of my heart and the innocency of my hands have I done this. And GOD said unto him in the dream, Yea, I know that in the integrity of thy heart thou has done this, and I also withheld thee from sinning against Me. Therefore suffered I thee not to touch her." (ASV)

In verse three, GOD made a formal charge against Abimelech of taking another man's wife. In verses four and five, Abimelech made his defense, and in verse six GOD answered him.

The question Abimelech asked here reminds one of Abraham's question to GOD in 18:23. "Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" He appealed to the words of Abraham and Sarah by pointing out that they had mentioned nothing about being married to each other. They had instead claimed only to be brother and sister. Abimelech then appealed to his integrity in his actions of taking Sarah. The word "integrity" comes from Tom.

> Tom — *"Integrity, completeness"* (Strong); *"The meaning is completeness, fullness, wholeness, perfection, integrity, soundness, simplicity, innocence, uprightness, prosperity, strength. ToMm is the opposite of mischief"* (Zodhiates).

What this shows is that those outside of the family of Abraham also knew GOD and His laws. Further, it shows that there were those who were doing their best to obey GOD. Abimelech showed his fear of, and respect for, the GOD of Heaven. Abimelech stated that he had taken Sarah with the most honorable of intentions and implied that, had he known she was Abraham's wife, he would not have taken her.

It is interesting that GOD kept Abimelech from sinning in this matter. One is not told exactly "how" he was kept from it, but "Who" kept him from sinning. Verse seventeen does tell one that there was some kind of physical problem which kept him from sinning. Did GOD keep him from committing a sin because he was innocent in his intentions? It appears to be so.

One should also consider that GOD considered this a sin against Him, i.e., if Abimelech had sinned against Sarah or Abraham, he would also be sinning against GOD.

> "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me...Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me" (Matthew 25:40, 45).

Later, as Saul of Tarsus approached Damascus to persecute Christians, Jesus again showed that sinning against His people was the same as sinning against Him. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me" (Acts 9:4)?

Gen. 20:7 "Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine."

> "Now therefore restore the man's wife. For he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live. And if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine." (ASV)

Abimelech heard the accusation GOD made against him. He then offered his defense, which included GOD's agreement that he had taken Sarah in all honesty and innocence. Now Abimelech learns what he must do to avoid a sentence of death by GOD upon him and his entire family.

GOD told Abimelech that there were two things he must do to avoid GOD's sentence of death for his actions. (1) He must restore Sarah to Abraham. (2) He must get Abraham to pray for him (implication — that he might be forgiven).

The text uses the word "prophet" for the first time in the Bible. In the world of 2017, if asked what the word "prophet" means, he will invariably hear that it is someone who foretells the future. The word "prophet" here is (nabiy).

> *nabiy* — *"Spokesman, speaker, prophet"* (Strong); *"A masculine noun meaning a prophet, a spokesman. The meaning is consistently one of prophet and inspired spokesman"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 700); *"A prophet, a speaker of oracles, one who was actuated by a divine Spirit; an authorized spokesman (usually for God). Such an individual did not speak his own words, but those which he had received from God"* (Zodhiates).

There are two other words in the Old Testament which are also translated as "prophet."

> Roeh — *"A masculine noun meaning a seer, prophetic vision...It refers to the vision or insight that the prophet receives"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1023).
>
> Chozeh — *"A masculine noun meaning a seer, a prophet. It is used only seventeen times in the Old Testament, always in the present active participle. The word means one who sees or perceives"* (IBID, p. 324).

When one studies the words used, it boils down to this: a prophet was a spokesman and teacher for GOD. He was chosen by GOD to communicate His will to mankind. A prophet used the past, the present, and sometimes the future to communicate GOD's will to man. Be it remembered that the word "prophet" is sometimes used to indicate a non-inspired man, such as Aaron, who was Moses' spokesman. The context will show if it is speaking of a non-inspired man or an inspired one.

One of the things which should be considered here is a prohibition against adultery. Consider: Why is Abimelech

to be punished? It was because he had taken Sarah to be a wife when she was already the wife of another man. True, He had not had physical relations with her yet, but the intent to do so was there. This passage should be considered in light of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:28.

> "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

It was not only the act but the intent which caused GOD's condemnation. The prohibition against adultery will be spelled out in detail in Exodus 20:14.

> "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10).

Apparently this was GOD's law before it was spelled out in the ten commandments, for notice that Abimelech was threatened with death because he had taken another man's wife. Today, the act of adultery is also punished by death — the spiritual death (separation) from GOD.

What was Abraham to do in this matter? He was GOD's prophet and therefore very special to Him. Further, Sarah had to be protected because of the child which she would bare (possibly already pregnant with that child). As GOD's faithful prophet (not perfect prophet), he was to pray for Abimelech so that he could be forgiven of his trespass against Abraham/Sarah and GOD. Thus, note that Abraham acted not only as a prophet, but also seemed to be acting as a priest. (Remember that in those days, the father acted as a priest for his family.) One should also consider that there are those who believe that part of the work of a prophet was to intercede on behalf of others with GOD.

> "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

A refusal to seek forgiveness by Abimelech would have led not only to his own death but the death of his family. The refusal of one today to seek forgiveness of his sins will lead to an eternal death — spiritual death.

A very important lesson which must be learned here is that, even if one does something wrong in perfect innocence, if that sin is not abandoned, he will be lost. Further, one must also seek forgiveness for that sin. Today, this principle should be applied to marriage, divorce and remarriage, where one has married another who does not have the right to marry again because, in GOD's eyes, he/she is still married to his/her previous mate. One may be married several times to people who do not have the

right to marry, and maybe he himself does not have the right to remarry. They may do this in perfect innocence, i.e., not knowing GOD's law and thinking that it is perfectly all right. In such a situation, even though they think they have done the right thing, like Abimelech, their supposed innocence is still condemned by GOD. They must repent. They must ask for GOD's forgiveness once they learn the truth of GOD's word and return to a position which GOD condones. This may mean that they will have to live (according to New Testament law) celibate for the rest of their lives.

Gen. 20:8-10 "Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?"

> "And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ear. And the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? And wherein have I sinned against thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?" (ASV)

One should carefully note that, after GOD spoke to Abimelech in the dream, Abimelech hastened to make things right with GOD. This is the mark of a man of GOD — he seeks to obey Him as quickly as he can. Later, one will see the same action on the part of Abraham in rising early to accomplish GOD's will (Genesis 22). It is evident that Abimelech understood what a terrible thing it was to sin against GOD. He knew that there were consequences for sin from a just GOD.

Another thing to notice is that Abimelech was not the only one who feared GOD here. When he revealed this information to his servants, their reaction was the same as his.

When one views verse nine, he must recognize the greatness of the sin of adultery. Note that Abimelech called it a "great sin" to take another's mate. Yet, most in America think it is of little consequence to marry another's mate. They think that the laws of the land trump GOD's laws, as long as one gets a decree of divorce from some judge. The truth is that many in America practice polygamy by being married a second (or more) time when GOD says they are still married to their first mate.

One should also note that the sin of the leader of this nation would have brought consequences to the entire nation. So many in American society say that the moral sins of presidents (or other political leaders) have no effect on others or the nation. Here is a direct refutation of that false belief.

In all of Abimelech's words, it can be seen that, though one acts in innocence, he can still be guilty of a great sin. The apostle Paul is a great example of this as well. In all good conscience he persecuted Christians. But though he did those things with a clear conscience, he was still guilty of sin. Further, it can be seen that deception which causes another to sin is not an excuse for the sinner. Instead, both the deceiver and the deceived are guilty before GOD.

In verse ten, Abimelech called upon Abraham to give an explanation as to why he had done this thing. Today, one might say, *"What were you thinking when you did this?"* Others believe he was asking what Abraham saw in him and his people which might have caused him to do this.

Gen. 20:11-13 "And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of GOD is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when GOD caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother."

> "And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of GOD is not in this place. And they will slay me for my wife's sake. And moreover she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife: and it came to pass, when GOD caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me. At every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother." (ASV)

Abraham offered two excuses as to why he had deceived Abimelech. (1) He did not believe the fear of GOD existed in this land. ("fear" — yirah — *"fear (of God), respect, reverence piety"* - Strong.) (2) These people will kill me and take Sarah.

A lack of faith in GOD is again observed in Abraham. It is suggested by MacArthur that Abraham may have reasoned, after the experience with Sodom and Gomorrah, that all people were as corrupt as they had been (p. 42). If that were the case, then why did Abraham travel to this place? Further, had he forgotten the great piety of Melchizedek? Had he forgotten that GOD had delivered "just Lot" from an extremely wicked place and that He could do the same if this place did not fear GOD?

Note that Abraham said, "I thought." He obviously did not approach GOD on this matter, just as Lot had not sought GOD's counsel when he chose to live in the well-watered plains with his family. When man does his own thinking without GOD's input, he is asking for trouble. Also, one should note that, unlike Adam (and others), Abraham did not try to blame this deception on his wife or others. He was wrong and he admitted it. A half-truth is still a lie. How embarrassing this must have been for him to be rebuked by one he had thought was less honorable than himself. One is also shown when it was determined that he and Sarah would deceive others regarding their actual relationship. It was when he left his father's house. It is not shown as a mutual decision; rather, he told Sarah this was what she was supposed to do. Thus, it is seen that Abraham's lack of faith regarding GOD's protection and promises had been long standing.

It is interesting to note how many commentators strive to make Abraham appear to have married a near kinswoman instead of his half-sister. This writer assumes it is because most people today recognize a prohibition against incest. But the Bible says Sarah was "the daughter of my father." It should be remembered that under the Mosaic and Christian laws, incest was indeed sinful. But under the patriarchal system under which Abraham lived, there is found no such prohibition.

Gen. 20:14-16 "And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved."

> "And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee. Dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver. Behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee. And in respect of all thou art righted." (ASV)

The word "prophet" is found in the Scriptures for the first time in verse seven of this chapter. It is clear from the context that this word refers to more than a teller of the future. Here it refers to one who belonged to GOD and spoke for Him. The kindness of Abimelech toward Abraham, even though Abraham has not dealt honestly with him, is simply due to the fact that Abramham is GOD's prophet. "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:15).

The gifts Abimelech gave to Abraham seem to be for the purpose of righting a wrong that has been committed. This seems strange to the western way of thinking. Often in eastern lands, it is customary for both parties to engage in gift-giving under similar settings. The gifts may be given here also for the purpose of cementing an alliance. Note that Abimelech, unlike Pharaoh in a similar situation, offered Abraham a choice of his lands in which to dwell. Even though Abraham has wronged him, Abimelech appeared to have accepted his explanation and wanted this powerful man of GOD near him. He may have reasoned correctly that having one of GOD's prophets near was a blessing to be coveted.

A thousand pieces of silver were given to Abraham as a testimony to Sarah's purity. She had done nothing wrong, and her sexual purity was intact.

> *"This action parallels a later requirement under the Mosaic Law for a perpetrator to compensate the father of an individual whose reputation may have been harmed. The money was to equal the price to be paid for a virgin daughter. This would have been fifty shekels according to Deuteronomy 22:29"* (Moore, p. 257).

Abimelech stated that the gift of a thousand pieces of silver was "a covering of the eyes." Crawford states that this was *"not for a veil which she was to procure for this amount, but as an atoning gift"* (Vol. 3, p. 395). As a veil was used to hide the face of one, if Crawford is correct here, this would hide the face of GOD against punishment from Him for wrong doing — thus, a reconciliation has been accomplished between Abimelech and GOD. It should be remembered that GOD told Abimelech that Abraham was to pray for him (v. 7). He did pray for him (v. 17). This would also cause a reconciliation between all of the human beings involved in this matter.

The term "reproved" comes from yakach, which is variously translated *"to prove, decide, judge, rebuke, reprove, correct, be right"* (Strong). When Abimelech spoke to Sarah on this occasion, he said the gift was to her "brother." But he had not been rebuked by GOD for taking Abraham's sister; he had been rebuked for taking Abraham's wife. Thus, the use of the term "brother" here would seem to be a rebuke to her. If so, then he would be telling her to tell the truth — the whole truth. This is, of course, a good admonition for all to contemplate and adopt in any age.

Gen. 20:17-18 "So Abraham prayed unto GOD: and GOD healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah

Abraham's wife."

> "And Abraham prayed unto GOD. And GOD healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants. And they bare children. For Jehovah had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife." (ASV)

The implication of this text is that Abimelech and his people knew they could not bare children. *How did they know this? Had sufficient time gone by that they would have realized no one was conceiving? Was some disease inflicting them that caused them to be unable to have sexual intercourse?* When one looks ahead, he sees GOD inflicting the Philistines with the disease of "emerods" in order to show them He was displeased with them (1 Samuel 5-6).

> *"How ironic that Abraham's prayers opened the wombs of Philistine women, but for twenty-five years his own wife had not been able to conceive"* (p. 156).

Abraham prayed for Abimelech and his people, and GOD restored their fertility.

Genesis — Chapter Twenty-one

Gen. 21:1-7 "And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which GOD had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as GOD had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, GOD hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age."

> "And Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as He had spoken. And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which GOD had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as GOD had commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, GOD hath made me to laugh. Every one that heareth will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should give children suck? For I have borne him a son in his old age." (ASV)

"And the Lord visited Sarah." GOD remembered the promise made to Sarah and Abraham (Genesis 17:16; 18:10). Now it was time for Him to fulfill the promise by

opening the dead womb of Sarah (Genesis 18:11) so that she could conceive. Thus, Isaac's birth was miraculous — it could not have happened under the laws of nature which GOD set forth. Regarding this, one should also note Romans 4:19-21.

> "being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of GOD through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to GOD; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

Not only was Sarah's womb dead, but Abraham's reproductive capabilities were also dead. Yet, though dead, GOD would bring forth life from the "dead tomb" of Sarah (her dead womb). It seems to this writer that there is a type here which would take place in life for sinful man when Jesus came forth from the tomb, giving life from death on the cross. This event would then be the antitype of Isaac's birth.

> *"The several instances of miraculous conception mentioned in Scriptures are the following: Sarah (Heb. 11:11); Rebekah (Gen. 25:21); Rachel (Gen. 30:22); Manoah's wife (Judg. 13:3-24); Hannah (1 Sam. 1:19-20); Elisabeth (Luke 1:24-25, 36-37, 58); and Mary, by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:31-35)"* (Crawford, Vol. 3, p. 407).

One should also observe that Isaac's birth (1) happened at the time GOD set for it, (2) according to the promise He had made of this child. GOD had also promised another child to be born, and in a miraculous manner.

> "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).

That child was also to be sent at a specified time.

> "when the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Galatians 4:4).

Just as the world was not ready for the anointed One to appear until a set time, neither were Abraham and Sarah ready for Isaac until a set time. Their faith was not where it needed to be when they first heard the announcement of an impending child. This is evidenced by their trying to help GOD out by the birth of Ishmael.

In verse three, it is noted that Abraham named the child "Isaac." This was the name GOD had chosen for this child (Genesis 17:19). Joseph was told that the child Mary was bearing should be named "Jesus" (Matthew 1:21). The name "Isaac" means *"he laughs"* (Strong). Abraham then fulfilled the command given to circumcise Isaac on the

eighth day after his birth.

> "ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:11-13).

His circumcision proclaimed Isaac to be a child of the covenant — a child of GOD. Abraham was one hundred years old at the birth of Isaac.

"Sarah said, GOD hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me." When Sarah, at about ninety years old, heard that she was going to have a child, she had laughed in unbelief (Genesis 18:12). At that time, GOD rebuked her for her laughter, because it was done in unbelief (Genesis 18:13-15). The laughter in this text is different. Now Sarah laughs from joy and states that others will rejoice with her because of Isaac's birth. Note again the similarity of Isaac's birth and the birth of the Redeemer. Mary did not question the angel's proclamation of what would happen to her from unbelief (Luke 1:34). She accepted the fact that what the angel said was going to take place. What she did not understand was the fact that she had never had sexual contact with a man, so how could she be pregnant? After hearing Elizabeth's inspired testimony Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the LORD, And my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my Saviour" (Luke 1:46-47).

> "The angel said unto them (the shepherds, RK), Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

Over two thousand years later, multitudes still rejoice at His birth.

The question posed in verse seven would indeed have been from a purely human standpoint. But from a believer's standpoint, this was going to, and did, happen.

It should also be noted that Sarah said she had "given children suck." The word "children" is not a typo. The Bible often uses the singular "child" for "children" and "children" for "child." Sarah had one child — "a son." This idea is important to Christians regarding the appointment of elders where the word "children" is used.

Gen. 21:8-10 "And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian,

which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

> "And the child grew, and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this handmaid and her son. For the son of this handmaid shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." (ASV)

"And the child grew, and was weaned" There are a number of suggestions as to how old a child was when weaned.

"Eastern women nurse a child until about age three" (Smith, p. 157).

"Jerome says there were two opinions on this subject. Some hold that children were always weaned at five years of age; others, that they were not weaned till they were twelve" (Quoted by Clarke, Vol. 1, p. 133).

There is a great lesson here for Christians. In the physical world, a child grows, and there is then a time for a baby's food to be removed from him, and adult food is to be consumed instead. So it is in the spiritual realm. Once one becomes a Christian, he is a babe in Christ, but he is not to remain a baby. From the time one is born again, he is to start growing to adulthood — grow up, babes in Christ.

"When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

This was indeed a time of celebration, for a milestone had been reached. Some have suggested that this was an important time, because there was so much infant mortality during that time. It is suggested that if a child reached the stage of being weaned, he had a good chance to reach adulthood. Here is the child GOD had promised well on his way to adulthood, so Abraham throws a big party for him.

But trouble was on the horizon. Sarah saw Ishmael "mocking" Isaac.

"mocking" — tsachaq — *"A verb meaning to laugh, to make jokes, to mock. It is used as an expression of joy or humor, but it also can be used to mock or make light of something serious"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 946).

Because of the above definition, some translators claim that Ishmael was simply playing with Isaac. But this does not fit at all with Galatians 4:29-30.

> "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (Galatians 4:30).

The apostle used this passage, referring to Ishmael's actions toward Isaac, to show how the world will treat the church. Ishmael persecuted Isaac.

> "persecuted" — διώκω — *"To make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away...to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after...to harass, trouble, molest one; to persecute"* (Thayer, p. 153).

Though the exact nature of Ishmael's action toward Isaac is not revealed, there can be little doubt (when putting all of the information together) that it was hostile in nature.

After viewing Ishmael's action, the protective mode of a mother kicked into a complaint against him. It should be considered that it might not have taken much for Sarah to have reacted this way, even though this does seem to be a serious threat toward Isaac. It should be remembered that after Sarah had concocted the scheme to provide Abraham with a child, that when Hagar became pregnant, she wanted to drive her away. This was because Hagar showed animosity toward Sarah. Thus, it appears that Hagar's attitude toward Sarah was adopted by her son toward Isaac.

Sarah told Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son." Strong states that the term "cast out" refers to the idea of *"divorce"* as well as to *"expel."* When Hagar fled from Sarah (Genesis 16), GOD told her to go back to Abraham and Sarah. But the context shows things are different now — GOD agrees with Sarah. The fact is self-evident from all which has been promised to Abraham that the heir of GOD's promises was to exist only through a son born to Abraham and Sarah. Since Sarah had only one son, that son was the heir promised to Abraham.

Gen. 21:11-13 "And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And GOD said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed."

> "And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son. And GOD said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy handmaid.

> In all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice. For in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the handmaid will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." (ASV)

Sarah's demand was "very grievous" to Abraham. The word "grievous" is from yara — *"to tremble, quiver"* (Strong); *"this verb means to spoil by breaking to pieces; to break"* (Zodhiates). One gets the idea from these definitions that Abraham's initial reaction was a "broken heart." He was exceedingly grieved by these events. This was his son as much as Isaac was his son. He obviously loved him and was concerned for his welfare.

Before one thinks too harshly of Sarah in this matter, it should be remembered that GOD had chosen her to bare the chosen child. It was Isaac through whom the seed promise would be fulfilled, not Ishmael. Further, GOD consistently has demanded that His people be separated from the profane and those who would hinder their spirituality. He called His people out of the land of sin (Egypt). He told them to drive the people of Canaan out, because their idolatries would infect His people. GOD had always demanded that His people be a separate people.

> "And what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? for ye are the temple of the living GOD; as GOD hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

Thus, what takes place here is GOD's providential separation of these two brothers in order to fulfil His plan. Isaac, and Isaac alone, was to be the child of GOD's promises.

GOD tells Abraham to do as Sarah has asked and explained why this was necessary — "for in Isaac shall thy seed be called." A spiritual lineage is of far more importance than a physical lineage. Spiritual health is far more important than physical health.

Abraham was next told that GOD would not forget Ishmael, because he was his son. Abraham here seems to need reassurance of an earlier promise by GOD that He would make a great nation out of Ishmael's seed (See Genesis 17:18-20). Notice the reason stated by GOD that Ishmael would become a mighty nation — because he was Abraham's seed. This is indeed a compliment to the way GOD viewed Abraham.

It has been mentioned before, but oh how much better it would have been for the world as a whole if Abraham and

Sarah had not tried to help GOD fulfil His promise. If they had but waited for GOD, a great share of the world's problems today would be solved. When one views the descendants of Ishmael, he sees nothing but trouble. Further, it would be from his seed that one of the worst religions in the world would come — Islam.

Gen. 21:14-16 "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept."

> "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and gave her the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. And the water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot. For she said, Let me not look upon the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. (ASV)

Once GOD had spoken on this matter, Abraham quickly did as he was told. His obedience is remarkable in every instance when GOD told him to do something. He did not hesitate; he did not look for an excuse to delay. Early the next morning, he arose and provided Hagar and her son with the necessities they needed for their journey. Another reason for them to be sent early in the morning was because that would have been a cooler time than noon.

The KJV gives the impression that Ishmael was a young boy whom Hagar had to carry and that she could throw him under a bush. But the age of Ishmael would have literally prevented both of these actions. It should be considered that Abraham was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:16). He was one hundred years old when Isaac was born, making Ishmael fourteen years old. Let us go with a conservative number of three years old for Isaac when the feast of the context was held. This would mean that Ishmael was at least seventeen years old when Abraham sent them away. A far better reading of these verses would be the NKJV.

In these verses one also sees a lack of faith in GOD exhibited by Hagar. One should remind himself of chapter sixteen, verse sixteen and following. Before Ishmael was born, GOD's angel had told her what kind of man he would be. She was also told that her descendants would be

without number. Ishmael, in the present text, was not a man yet, nor would he be for a number of years. In the teens today, most think they are mature and grown up, but such is not the case for quite a few years after the teenage years.

Another thing to note from chapter sixteen is that GOD intended to provide for Ishmael long before the present text of study. This was so even though Abraham, Sarah and Hagar had sinned in bringing him into existence. Obviously, GOD looked ahead and knew what was on the horizon and would not punish him because of the circumstances of his birth. GOD did not punish one then because of the circumstances of his birth (conceived because of sinful actions), nor does He do so today. People being born a sinner is obviously a lie. GOD holds each person accountable for their own sins — not those of others.

Gen. 21:17-21 "And GOD heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of GOD called to Hagar out of Heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for GOD hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And GOD opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And GOD was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

> "And GOD heard the voice of the lad. And the angel of GOD called to Hagar out of Heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not. For GOD hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand. For I will make him a great nation. And GOD opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And GOD was with the lad, and he grew. And he dwelt in the wilderness, and became, as he grew up, an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. And his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." (ASV)

The first thing of which one should remind himself is that Ishmael was not a small boy, as the text might lead one to believe. He was at least seventeen years of age, as shown before.

Verse twenty showed Hagar leaving her son and walking a distance away. There the text says she "lift up her voice, and wept." Verse twenty-one says, "GOD heard the voice of the lad." Why is emphasis put upon GOD's hearing the lad, but not Hagar? Could this be because of the promise GOD made to Abraham and Hagar about this son?

"The angel of GOD" Who was this angel? Was it one of GOD's angels which wait upon Him around His throne?

Or was it, as some have thought, the Son of GOD? Which ever the case is, GOD was fulfilling His promise to Abraham. He was not going to allow Ishmael and his mother to die of thirst. The "angel" also renewed the promise to make a great nation from Ishmael (v. 18). This renewal leads this writer to believe that the angel is the Son of GOD.

"Opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water" Hagar was not blind, nor had she been walking around in the desert with her eyes closed. Was the well at a distance, and she had missed it before? Did she not see it before because of her distressed condition? Did GOD keep her from seeing it before to provide this opportunity to renew the promise and remind her of his watch-care?

Verses twenty and twenty-one reveal four things with regard to Ishmael. (1) GOD was with him. (2) He lived in the wilderness of Paran. (3) He became an archer, which would help him in food gathering and also war. (4) His wife was an Egyptian. These brief bits of information halt for the time being the account of Ishmael and return to the account of Isaac.

> *"Mohammedan Arabs all claim descent from Ishmael; they hold that the well which God revealed to Hagar was the sacred well of Zemzem at Mecca, their holy city. It should be noted that Ishmael's line soon lost all spiritual kinship with Abraham and his posterity"* (Crawford, p. 413).

Gen. 21:22-24 "And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, GOD is with thee in all that thou doest: Now therefore swear unto me here by GOD that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear."

> "And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, GOD is with thee in all that thou doest. Now therefore swear unto me here by GOD that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. But according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear." (ASV)

GOD's blessings upon Abraham are so obvious that Abimelech and his people cannot help but notice them. Today one would probably say that Abimelech wanted a treaty of non-aggression with Abraham. The word "swear" is from shaba, which is to *"take an oath, straitly, (cause to, make to) swear"* (Strong). This oath would be witnessed

not only by Abraham and Abimelech and those of their families, but also before GOD. It should be considered that an oath is truly a promise, and even today when a promise is made, whether one intends to or not, GOD is a witness of it. One should remember that GOD does not countenance lying on any level. Oath breaking is lying!

> *"This bond of friendship must be strengthened by the bond of an oath, in which the true God was appealed to, both as a witness of their sincerity and an avenger in case either side were treacherous"* (Henry, p. 41).

One of the interesting things to consider is how these oaths were made. An animal was offered as a sacrifice (usually a sheep). It would be split in half, and the two halves would be placed on the ground parallel to each other. Then those taking the oath would walk between the two halves (Genesis 15:10, 17; Jeremiah 34:18). The oath being thus confirmed, a feast was held afterward to cement the friendship entered into.

Why did Abimelech think that Abraham would enter such a treaty with him? Because he had always done the right thing by Abraham, showing him great kindness, even though Abraham had lied to him in the past about Sarah. Abimelech was a wise ruler, and as such he desired that this "peace treaty" would extend not only to himself, but also for generations after him. Abraham told Abimelech he would take an oath to the intent that Abimelech desired.

Gen. 21:25-27 "And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant."

> "And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I know not who hath done this thing. Neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to-day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech. And they two made a covenant." (ASV)

Verse twenty-five (and the context which follows) reminds one of Matthew 18:15.

> "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

Abraham reproved him over a stolen well. Abimelech did not know that some of his people had taken this well from Abraham. But he acted like the great leader he was and took responsibility for their actions, as he should have.

What was the result? A great friendship which was mutually beneficial to both was saved. In his answer, Abimelech may also be saying that Abraham should have told him about this theft earlier.

Abraham now provided a gesture of good will by giving Abimelech sheep and oxen. Was Abraham providing the animals for sacrifice and the feast which would have followed? This possibility seems to exist, because the next thing said was "both of them made a covenant."

Gen. 21:28-31 "And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them."

> "And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, These seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that it may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba. Because there they sware both of them." (ASV)

Separate from the other animals which Abraham gave Abimelech (v. 27), he set seven ewe lambs aside. This was puzzling to Abimelech, as indicated by the text. When questioned about them, Abraham showed that they were given and received as an acknowledgment that he had dug the well and that it belonged to him. Why the number seven? The number seven is often referred to as one of the sacred numbers of the Scriptures.

> *"...from the sacredness of the number 7, the real origin and ground of which are to be sought in the number 7 of the work of creation, seven things were generally chosen to give validity to an oath, as was the case, according to Herodotus (3, 8), with the Arabians among others"* (Keil-Delitzsch, Vol. 1, p. 247).

Abraham named this place because of the oath which he and Abimelech took. The name "Beersheba" is a compound word. "Beer" meaning "well;" but the later part of the word could mean one of two things, either "seven" or "oath." Most would translate the word as "well of the oath," as found in the margin of this writer's Bible. But it would seem to this writer that a combination of the two is probably the better translation of this word. Thus, Strong translates it, "well of the sevenfold oath." The city of Beersheba is located approximately forty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem.

Gen. 21:32-34 "Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting GOD. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days."

> "So they made a covenant at Beer-sheba. And Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the Everlasting GOD. And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days." (ASV)

After the covenant has been made between these two leaders, Abimelech and his commander (Phichol) return to the land of the Philistines. This writer believes this speaks of the primary area the Philistines inhabited.

> *"Philistines, a tribe allied to the Phoenicians. They were a branch of the primitive race which spread over the whole district of Lebanon and the valley of the Jordan, and Crete and other Mediterranean islands. Some suppose them to have been a branch of the Rephaim (2 Sam. 21:16-22). In the time of Abraham they inhabited the south-west of Judea, Abimelech of Gerar being their king (Gen. 21:32, 34; 26:1)"* (Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary).

Strong states that the name "Philistine" means "immigrants."

> *"An inhabitant of Philistia; descendant of Mizraim who immigrated from Caphtor (Crete?) To the western seacoast of Canaan"* (Strong).

Abraham remained in Beersheba, where the KJV states he "planted a grove." Both the ASV and NKJV state he planted a "tamarisk tree."

> "Seven species of this tree are found in Palestine. It is a 'very graceful tree, with long feathery branches and tufts closely clad with the minutest of leaves, and surmounted in spring with spikes of beautiful pink blosoms, which seem to envelop the whole tree in one gauzy sheet of colour'" (Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary).

> *"The original word eshel has been variously translated a grove, a plantation, an orchard, a cultivated field, and an oak"* (Clarke, p. 135).

This planting, with the well, suggests a "permanent" residence and would seem to foreshadow the eventual occupation of Canaan by the descendants of Abraham (Israelites). Couple that with the purchasing of a burial place (Machpelah, 23:1ff) later, and one has the first physical instance of Israel's future ownership of the land.

"called there on the name of the Lord" signifies worship.

Note further that the One he worshiped is called the "everlasting GOD." The word here is owlam, and it is the first time this word is used to signify the attribute of GOD's eternal nature.

> "everlasting" — owlam — *"long duration, antiquity, futurity, for ever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world"* (Strong).

That Abimelech considered this as part of his kingdom is shown in his servants' taking this well. Further, Abimelech gave Abraham permission to reside in his land. Beersheba was thus considered to be a part of the "Philistine's land." Abraham stayed here "many days." The word days here is the generic word for an indefinite amount of time. It can be a short time or a very long time. Considering the events of the next chapter, it would appear that he stayed there a long time.

Genesis — Chapter Twenty-two

Gen. 22:1-2 "And it came to pass after these things, that GOD did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

> "And it came to pass after these things, that GOD did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah. And offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (ASV)

In the present time the word "tempt" usually signifies a solicitation to sin. But the original word here (nacah) means *"to test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test"* (Strong). Since GOD does not try to get man to sin, then the idea here is a test of Abraham's faith — will he be obedient to GOD no matter what faces him?

> "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13).

> *"Satan tempts men to bring out the worst in them; God tests them to help bring out the best"* (Smith, p. 160).

It should be remembered that in the past, when faced with a trial which he thought would cost him his life, Abraham had shown a lack of faith and trust in GOD.

> *"God put great honour on Abraham by giving him this opportunity of showing to all successive ages the nature and efficacy of an unshaken faith in the*

power, goodness, and truth of God" (Symmachus, quoted by Clarke, p. 138).

In what way(s) was this a test? GOD had promised him a son by Sarah, and this was her only child. GOD told Abraham to take this son and put him to death. How then would the promises of a great posterity come through this son if he were dead? Further, this was not something which could easily be done without great sacrifice. To offer a lamb on an altar would have been quite easy, especially since Abraham was very rich in flocks. Such an offering would be easy to desire accomplishing on Abraham's part. But to tell a man to offer this only son of promise would be something a man would naturally desire to avoid. What would Abraham do? This was the test.

"Strong faith is often exercised with strong trials and put upon hard services" (Henry, p. 41).

When GOD called Abraham, his response was immediate. "Behold, here I am" which, according to the center reference in this author's Bible, reads *"Behold me."* Abraham was instantly ready to serve GOD when He called him. There was no hesitation. GOD's faithful children will always be ready to serve Him under any circumstance.

GOD told Abraham to take "thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest" and sacrifice him. The phrase "only son" is repeated in verses twelve and sixteen. Abraham was told to take Isaac to Mount Moriah.

"Traditionally associated with Jerusalem, this is the site on which Solomon's temple would be built later" (MacArthur, p. 43).

Isaac was not Abraham's "only" son in the traditional sense (Ishmael). But he was the **only son of promise**, that is the one which had been promised through Sarah and through whom the seed line would lead to the Messiah. Why is this account shown to man? Was it simply to show the great faith of Abraham? Or was it to show mankind (of all ages) that the kind of man which pleases GOD is the one who loves Him even above a beloved member of his family?

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

It is interesting that the word "love" appears for the first time in the Bible in verse two. Please consider the following lengthy quote.

"It does seem strange, at first, that 'love' is first mentioned, not in connection with the love of a man for his wife, of a mother for her children, of brotherly love, of love for country, or even of man's love for God. Instead, it is used of the love of a father for his son. 'Thy son, whom thou lovest.' Furthermore, it is used in connection with the sacrificial offering of that

only, and beloved, son. The deep love of a father for his only son (yet a father who is willing to slay him) is thus inferred to be representative of the most complete and meaningful concept of the very word 'love' itself.

This might seem enigmatic until it is realized that in Abraham and Isaac God is giving us a beautiful picture of God the Father and God the Son. That Isaac is a type of Christ is confirmed by Galatians 3:16, and that the experience of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah is a type of the offering of Christ on Mount Calvary is confirmed by the terminology in Hebrews 11:17-19....

Now we note a most remarkable and beautiful evidence of divine planning in the very structure of Scripture. The first mention of 'love' in the Old Testament is this record of the love of an earthly father for his only son, a love which was to suffer the most intense anguish of soul because he would have to offer up that beloved son as a burnt offering. This, however, is recognized as a type of God the Father sacrificing His only-begotten and much-beloved Son" (Morris, p. 375).

Note with wonder and awe the first time love is spoken of in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

"And lo a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17, emphasis mine, RK).

"And there came a voice from Heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11, emphasis mine, RK).

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22, emphasis mine, RK).

"For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, emphasis mine, RK).

Gen. 22:3-4 "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which GOD had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off."

"And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass,

and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which GOD had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." (ASV)

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning" When did GOD tell Abraham to make this sacrifice? Was it the day before with a night's rest, or was it during the night? Was it a verbal command, or was it a vision or dream? These are questions which cannot specifically be answered. It is this writer's belief that the message came during the night in whatever form it may have come. What is known is that Abraham rose up early in the morning to accomplish GOD's will. This is a good lesson for man in any age to learn — he must be willing to do whatever GOD has asked when GOD asks it. Why hesitate? When man hesitates to obey GOD, it gives him time to be influenced by doubts and the possibility of hardening his heart. The time to obey GOD is immediately upon understanding what His will is.

> "And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him" (Matthew 4:21-22, emphasis mine, RK).

One can be assured that Satan does not hesitate when he sees one wavering away from him.

> "These are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts" (Mark 4:15, emphasis mine, RK).

What is the Biblical purpose of sacrifice? Is it not to worship? Note from Abraham's example that worship takes preparation to be successful. He prepared the wood and took the knife so that when he arrived at GOD's designated place, he could immediately obey GOD. What about worship today? Is it something which should be entered into without preparation? GOD has designated a place for corporate worship — the gathering of the saints wherever the physical place decided upon may be. The heart must be prepared before proper worship can take place. Too often, this writer feels like so many hurry on Sunday morning to get ready after sleeping too long or watching television or listening to music or reading the news. They jump into their automobiles, hurry to the meeting house and arrive moments before time to start. It is no wonder then that there is a hurried atmosphere to finish worship as quickly as possible. When one does not adequately prepare for worship, how can he possibly enjoy anything but a hurried assault on "worship?" How can one look

forward to and relish every minute of worship without adequate preparation?

Abraham took two servants and Isaac with him and began the journey. How old was Isaac at this time? Many picture him as a little boy. But upon what is the idea of this age based? Is it not pictures which artists have drawn to illustrate this event, especially those done for children's eyes? The historian Josephus followed the tradition of his Jewish ancestors that he was twenty-five years old (Antiq., I, 13, 2).

> *"Josephus supposed that Isaac was now twenty-five; some Rabbins that he was thirty-six; but it is more probable that he was about thirty-three, the age at which his great Antitype was offered up"* (Clarke, p. 138).

This placed Isaac's age at a time of strength and with a mind capable of reasoning through and even objecting to, and fleeing from the altar. But one should carefully note in the context of these events that he allowed his father to bind him and place him on the altar. He was willing to be offered in sacrifice so that Abraham could bind his will to GOD. Friends, Jesus allowed His Father to sacrifice Him so that man could properly worship Him. These were voluntary actions on both counts — Isaac and Jesus.

Gen. 22:5-6 "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together."

> "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. And they went both of them together." (ASV)

How could Abraham tell his servants that he and Isaac would return, knowing what he was about to do? The answer to this question is found in Hebrews 11:17-19.

> "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that GOD was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Had Abraham seen a resurrection in the past? If not, then at some point in his reasoning on this journey, he came to the conclusion that GOD could raise one from the dead. After all, had he not seen GOD make two dead wombs

come alive?

Truly this account shows that Abraham had learned to trust GOD completely. No matter what GOD told him to do, he was willing to obey. No matter how impossible the situation may seem — trust GOD.

> *"All Abraham knew was that (a) God planned the future around Isaac, and (b) God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac. He could not reconcile the two, but he would obey anyway"* (Zuck, p. 65).

Note again the type and anti-type. The sacrifice carried his own wood to the place of sacrifice. Christ carried the cross to His place of sacrifice.

Abraham told the servants that he and Isaac were going to worship. The word worship comes from shachah.

> "Shachah was not used in the general sense of worship, but specifically to bow down, to prostrate oneself as an act of respect before a superior being" (Zodhiates).

Abraham was going to the place of sacrifice to bow his will to that of GOD. In the same way, Jesus bowed His will to that of the Father — "nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Further, Abraham told his servants that he would return and implied, *"You are to wait for me."* It also implied that his servants would be watching for his return. Speaking of His promise to return, Jesus told His servants to watch for Him.

> "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:33-37).

Gen. 22:7-8 "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, GOD will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."

> "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, GOD will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son. So they went both of them together." (ASV)

Isaac had been raised by a father who built altars

everywhere he went, and thus one who was infinitely concerned with true worship. Thus, he was well aware of the requirements of the sacrificial animal to this process. His question then was of great importance — where is the lamb?

Only one who has ever lost a child can come close to understanding the emotions of Abraham at this time. Here was the promised son he had waited for for so long. Now he had been commanded to take the life of this son. What he must have gone through in these three days as he took this innocent to the place of sacrifice. Yet, as painful as this was, he did not hesitate. He did not waver.

One should consider here that faithfulness to GOD and His requirements for a faithful, obedient life can be painful. It must be clearly implanted on one's heart that a religion which cost nothing is worth nothing. This world demands that those who serve GOD pay a price in order to try to convince them to give up their allegiance to GOD. David clearly understood this principle when he offered a sacrifice to GOD on the threshing floor of Araunah, which Araunah had offered to give him.

> "The king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my GOD of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver" (2 Samuel 24:24).

On the other hand, **the world** recognizes the importance of breaking the pattern of pure worship — such is the only way to get people away from true service to GOD. This principle was illustrated by Jeroboam. After the united nation of Israel divided (Israel and Judah), Jeroboam became Israel's first king. But the Temple where GOD's people were to worship was in Jerusalem. Jeroboam wanted to break the people away from any loyalty they might have to Judah and thus to GOD. Notice what he told the people as the reason for setting up false gods for them to worship.

> "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:27-28, emphasis mine, RK).

If one would serve GOD correctly in worship, he must understand that there is no price too great to pay in order to gain GOD's approval in correct worship. Jeroboam

advocated a convenient religion — *"Do not worship if it costs you something, if you have to sacrifice something in your life (especially if it is something you dearly love)."* What does this say to those who will not give up a hobby in order to worship or think it is too far to travel or think of the extra dollar they could make through voluntary work or of their favorite televison program, et cetera?

> *"The believer was told, 'But you may have to die.' He responded, 'Who said I had to live.' The believer was told 'But you may have to give up life.' He replied, 'What is life for'"* (Winkler, p. 271).

> "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him" [Job 13:15 — *"I will defend my own ways before Him"* (NKJV)].

One must obey GOD with his deeds and not simply with his lips.

What a statement of faith Abraham offered on this occasion: "GOD will provide Himself a lamb."

> *"Alders assures us that the literal meaning of this clause in Hebrew is: 'God sees before him the lamb for sacrifice!'"* (Coffman, p. 290).

Though speaking about his son, yet, the statement seems also to be a prophetic one. Man could not pick a sacrifice for his sins because, no matter what he picked, it would not suffice. But "when the fulness of the time was come, GOD sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Consider that a "ram" was offered instead of Isaac — not a lamb, and the allusion to Christ seems more apparent. GOD indeed provided "Himself a Lamb."

Gen. 22:9-13 "And they came to the place which GOD had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of Heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest GOD, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son."

> "And they came to the place which GOD had told him of. And Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of Heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou

anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest GOD, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." (ASV)

Man's faith can be attacked in so many different ways. If doubt about GOD can be created by Satan in any way, then it opens the door for more and more doubt to control the mind and possibly give up one's faith in GOD. When one considers the events of this chapter, look at all the opportunities presented to Abraham to destroy his faith. Every day, hour and minute of that journey would have given him time to think about and question the goodness of GOD. Yet, he did not give Satan a crack to exploit.

Abraham built the altar and bound Isaac, placing him on the altar. It has been argued by some that Abraham could not have bound Isaac and placed him upon the altar if he were not a child or teenager. But as noticed in verses three and four, the Jewish historian Josephus placed Isaac as being twenty-five at this time and others have placed him as old as thirty-six at this time. One of the things to consider carefully here is Isaac being a type of Christ. If Isaac was a minimum of twenty-five years old, then it shows he was laying down his life in honor of his father's (Abraham) will. In other words, he voluntarily gave his life in sacrifice. This fits more perfectly the type and anti-type. The Bible is clear that Christ voluntarily gave His life to obey His Father's will. If He had not volunteered, the Roman soldiers could not have forced Him onto that cross.

"Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10:17-18, emphasis mine, RK).

"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42).

Consider in this act the great love, trust and honor Isaac showed his father. Consider the great love, trust and honor Jesus showed His Father in offering Himself as the sacrifice for the redemption of mankind through His blood. Further, in Jesus' case, consider the great love He showed for fallen man (for you and me).

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

In the case of the Lord, He laid down His life for those who had made themselves His enemies through their sins. "Oh

what matchless love."

The time had come and, without a quiver of doubt, Abraham picked up the knife to slay his only begotten son. (Remember that the phrase "only begotten" refers to one of a kind.) The angel of the Lord called from Heaven halting him. So intent was Abraham's willingness to obey GOD demonstrated on this occasion, that though he did not actually plunge the knife into Isaac's chest, GOD said he offered him.

> "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son" (Hebrews 11:17).

Abraham was able to do this because he believed his GOD; and he believed He was so powerful that, even if he had been allowed to plunge that knife into Isaac's chest — GOD could fulfill His promise through Isaac by raising him from the dead.

> "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that GOD was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:18-19).

Consider here a thought presented by Morris.

> *"For all practical purposes, Isaac had been dead for three days. The three days of apparent death obviously correspond to the three days during which Christ was actually dead"* (p. 380).

It was as if Isaac's life had been given back to him by a resurrection. Christ was resurrected from the grave, unlike Isaac, never to die again.

Just as Abraham had told Isaac, the Lord would provide the sacrifice. He saw the ram caught in the thicket.

There is also something interesting in GOD's words to Abraham. In verse eleven, one notices that it is the "angel of the Lord" which spoke to Abraham. In verse twelve, the "angel of the Lord" said, "thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." Who was the "angel of the Lord?" It could only have been deity.

There is another interesting phrase found in verse twelve — "Now I know that thou fearest GOD." This suggests, not that GOD cannot know everything, but that sometimes He may limit His knowledge. One might also remind himself of the events of Genesis chapter eighteen with regard to this thought.

> "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know" (Genesis 18:20-21, emphasis mine, RK).

How did GOD know that Abraham feared Him? **By Abraham's actions!**

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of GOD. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:21-24).

Another thought which should be considered here is the introduction of an atonement offered as a substitution for another. The ram was offered as a substitution for Isaac, the type of Christ. When one views Christ, he sees Him offering Himself as the atonement for man. This is seen in further details offered by the Scriptures.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:4-6).

"John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

"When we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:10-11).

Gen. 22:14 "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen."

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh. As it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided." (ASV)

Abraham gave the place of the sacrifice a name which glorified GOD. The name "Jehovahjireh" has been interpreted as meaning *"Jehovah sees"* (Strong); *"The Lord will see"* (Clarke, p. 141); *"the Lord will provide"* (Zuch, p. 65). Not only did this name honor GOD, but it is also an

encouragement to believers in that when one has done all he is commanded, then GOD provides his needs. A substitution was needed to spare Isaac's life, and GOD provided it.

Carefully note the last phrase of this verse. **"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."** Note the future tense — **"it shall be seen."** This fits everything seen in this chapter with regard to Isaac as a type, as well as the things around the sacrifice being a type. The day was coming when GOD would provide the atonement in substitution for man and his sins. And again, GOD that cannot lie, has fulfilled His promise. GOD provided on the cross what man could not provide for himself.

Gen. 22:15-18 "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice."

> "And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By Myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because thou hast obeyed My voice." (ASV)

"When GOD made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein GOD, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for GOD to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:13-18).

The covenant promise made to Abraham in chapter fifteen was renewed here. But, notice upon what it was renewed — the fact that Abraham "had offered his son" in the eyes of GOD. Is this possibly the answer to the question one has been asked over the years with regard to a person who is on his way to be baptized but is killed in

some accident???? Abraham was so determined to obey GOD, that GOD reckoned it as if he had literally obeyed Him.

Note a difference between this covenant and that of chapter fifteen. There the covenant was simply made, whereas here it was made with an oath. That covenant was now made stronger (if it is possible to make a promise by GOD stronger). Here the oath was made after Abraham showed his willingness to obey even an "extreme" command of GOD. What if Abraham had refused to obey GOD on this occasion? Would GOD have renewed this covenant with an oath? Or would He have found another through whom the covenant would be fulfilled? The answer to these questions seems obvious to this author. GOD would have chosen another.

> "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37).

One should again note that the "angel of the Lord" was speaking and that it is very obvious here that this is deity (The Word) speaking to Abraham — "by Myself have I sworn."

In noting the promises made to Abraham, it might be noted that the original covenant mentioned his posterity as being as numerous as the stars. But here, GOD adds the sands of the sea. As Morris noted, Abraham could only have seen a limited number of stars with the naked eye, but he could take a handful of sand and consider how numerous were the grains in his hand and then look with wonder at the expanse of the beach itself, much less all the beaches in the world. Morris states that there are approximately ten million grains of sand in a square foot (p. 384). He further observed that the grains of the sand compared to the number of stars is very comparable in number (ten to the twenty-fifth power).

> *"This is an excellent example of scientific truth found in the Bible long before scientists, by other means learned that the two metaphors are essentially identical"* (Morris, IBID).

"Shall possess the gate of his enemy" This was fulfilled literally when Abraham's descendants conquered the promised land led by Joshua. But note that there is something intended here more than the action of the Israelites under Joshua's leadership. It is "thy seed," singular, which shall conquer the gates of the enemy.

> "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

A gate is an entrance and, especially in that time, was considered to be the only way into a city. To possess the

gate was to possess the domain of the city itself. Who conquered the realm of the dead, the city of the dead, if you please? It was Christ. Abraham was promised that through his seed, his descendants, One would arise who would conquer all of His enemies. How did He do that? By conquering death through His resurrection. Today, through Christ's victory, Christians have spiritual dominion over all their enemies.

> "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:36-37).

Gen. 22:19 "So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba."

> "So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba." (ASV)

Abraham had told his servants, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you" (v. 5). GOD allowed him to keep that promise when He spared Isaac.

Now the party traveled back to Beersheba where Abraham made his home. Consider the significance of Beersheba.

> "Well of the oath, or well of seven, a well dug by Abraham, and so named because he and Abimelech here entered into a compact (Gen. 21:31). On re-opening it, Isaac gave it the same name (Gen. 26:31-33). It was a favorite place of abode of both of these patriarchs (21:33-22:1, 19; 26:33; 28:10). It is mentioned among the 'cities' given to the tribe of Simeon (Josh. 19:2; 1 Chr. 4:28). From Dan to Beersheba, a distance of about 144 miles (Judg. 20:1; 1 Chr. 21:2; 2 Sam. 24:2), became the usual way of designating the whole Promised Land, and passed into a proverb. After the return from the Captivity the phrase is narrowed into 'from Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom' (Neh. 11:30). The kingdom of the ten tribes extended from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim (2 Chr. 19:4). The name is not found in the New Testament. It is still called by the Arabs Bir es-Seba, i.e., 'well of the seven', where there are to the present day two principal wells and five smaller ones. It is nearly midway between the southern end of the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean" (Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary).

Gen. 22:20-24 "And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah."

> "And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she also hath borne children unto they brother Nahor. Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram. And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. And Bethuel begat Rebekah. These eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bare Tebah, and Gaham, and Tahash, and Maacah." (ASV)

It seems that Abraham and Nahor may have not been in communication all these years since Abram had traveled south. Now someone gives Abraham some exact information about his brother and the children which were born to him. The most important note here is the granddaughter — Rebekah. Rebekah will come into prominence in chapter twenty-four.

Genesis Chapter Twenty-three

Gen. 23:1-2 "And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."

> "And the life of Sarah was a hundred and seven and twenty years. These were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan. And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." (ASV)

Clarke points out that *"Sarah is the only woman in the sacred writings whose age, death, and burial are distinctly noted"* (p. 143). There is more said about Sarah in the Bible than there is even about Mary, the mother of Jesus. Truly Sarah was a great and godly woman, who like all human beings had her faults but was able to overcome them to the point that she is so honored by GOD in His book.

> *"Sarah's example is put forth in several passages in the New Testament. She is mentioned (1) when contrasting the two laws in Galatians 4:19-31), (2) when mentioning the faithful in Hebrews 11:11-12, and (3) when Peter exhorted wives to follow her*

example in 1 Peter 3:5-7)" (Goddard, p. 280).
As Abraham is the father of the faithful, so also was Sarah the mother of the faithful (1 Peter 3:6).

"Kirjatharba" — *"in the city of the four"* (Clarke, p. 143); *"the city of Arba"* (Poole, p. 53). This appears to be the oldest known name of this place, which later became known as Hebron. (Keil and Delitzsch believe Hebron was the original name, changed by Arba, and then later given its original name by the conquering Israelites, p. 254.) This shows that Abraham had moved his family from their last known place (Beersheba) back to the first place they settled in this land after leaving Haran.

"Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." One does not know where Abraham was when Sarah died. Some have speculated that he was at Beersheba, while others think he may have been in the fields with his flocks. Wherever he was, when he learned of Sarah's death, he appears to have immediately come to her. His beloved Sarah was dead, and one would expect nothing less than for Abraham to mourn and weep for her. In American society, restraint is often practiced at the death of a loved one with quiet tears. But in much of the world, especially in the East, death is often proclaimed with loud wailing and demonstrations of grief. Mourning is a natural process of the body, and tears help relieve stress and grief. One should never be ashamed for tears of sorrow over the passing of a loved one. This writer has observed over the many years of his life that when the loved ones of someone who has died freely express their grief they sociologically do better than those who express little or no emotion.

Gen. 23:3-6 "And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead"

> "And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spake unto the children of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord. Thou art a prince of GOD among us. In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead. None of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead" (ASV).

"sons of Heth" From verse ten, it appears that these were Hittites. Their original land would have been what is today called Turkey. Crawford gives the following short

history of the Hittites.

> *"The Hittite empire was founded about 1800 B.C. by a Indo-European people who had settled in Canaan and throughout the Near East in city-states at a much earlier time. Hence the name is given to an ethnic group living in Canaan from patriarchal times and until after the Israelite occupation (cf. Joshua 1:4; Genesis 15:20; Deuteronomy 7:1; Judges 3:5). These were called the 'children of Heth' (23:5) after their eponymous ancestor Heth, a son of Canaan (Genesis10:15). The center of the great Hittite empire was in what is now Turkey; their capital city was Hattusas (or Boghazkoi) located in the bend of the Halys River. The discovery of iron is reported to have occurred in this area, in the region of the Black Sea, during this period of Hittite hegemony"* (p. 459).

"give me a possession" It is obvious from the context that Abraham was not asking for a gift. He was asking for permission to buy a piece of land for which he offered a very fair price.

"a stranger and a sojourner"

"stranger" — ger — refers to one being a foreigner. *"It denotes a stranger, foreigner, alien, pilgrim, sojourner, guest, visitor"* (Zodhiates, CD).

"sojourner" — toshav — designates *"a squatter who could not possess land. He was a sojourner in a foreign country where he was not naturalized"* (Zodhiates, CD).

This is interesting from the standpoint that GOD had said this land belonged to Abraham and his descendants. It must be remembered that at this time it was only theirs in promise.

> *"The expression 'stranger and sojourner' is an idiomatic expression for 'resident alien'"* (Coffman, p. 299).

When one considers the thought here, he cannot help but be reminded that, in this world, all people are but strangers and squatters. Truly, all human "possessions" do not belong to them. Question: *"Do we **really** believe this?"* The Bible shows us that the patriarchs understood this principle.

> "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD...These all died in faith, not having received

the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13, emphasis mine, RK).

Indeed, this world is not one's home. Man truly owns nothing and is simply journeying through this world to reach a permanent home. Everything he calls his own has only been entrusted to him for the purpose of using it to glorify GOD.

"This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue; The angels beckon me from heaven's open door, And I can't feel at home in this world anymore" (Brumley, song # 545). Amen!

Why did the children of Heth offer to share any of their tombs with Abraham? The answer is found in the respect they had for Abraham — "thou art a mighty prince among us." The word "mighty" is Elohim, the common word for GOD. They are not calling Abraham a god. Rather, they are referring to him as a *"prince of GOD,"* one upon whom GOD's favor was clearly shown. There is no doubt they knew the piety of Abraham and had seen the many altars he had built to offer worship to GOD through his sacrifices.

Genesis 23:7-9 "And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you."

"And Abraham rose up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in the midst of you for a possession of a burying-place" (ASV).

In the negotiations for a burial site, Abraham arose and then "bowed himself to the people of the land."

"bowed" — shachah — *"to depress; to prostrate oneself (in homage to royalty or to God)"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Abraham was not only showing honor to the people, but he was placing his welfare and wishes in their control. He was petitioning them for a favor. What does he desire from them? That they act as negotiators in obtaining a particular

cave [Machpelah — *"cave of trouble,"* (Crawford, p. 460)] from a particular person (Ephron).

Genesis 23:10-13 "And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there."

> "Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me. The field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee. In the presence of the children of my people give I it thee. Bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt, I pray thee, hear me. I will give the price of the field. Take it of me, and I will bury my dead there." (ASV)

There are two possibilities seen in Ephron's offer to give Abraham the land. Either he was being generous, or he wanted to extract something from Abraham. Regarding the latter position, MacArthur offers the following thoughts.

> *"This suggests not that Ephron felt generous, but that he was constrained by feudal polity, which tied ownership of land with service to the ruler. Passing the land to Abraham would pass also feudal responsibilities to Abraham, making him liable for all taxes and duties"* (p. 44).

If MacArthur's thought is correct, then it would have also made Abraham an ally with responsibilities to defend Ephron in times of war. In short — Abraham would have owed him.

Genesis 23:14-16 "And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant."

> "And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me. A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy

dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron. And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant." (ASV)

Ephron finally set a price of four hundred shekels for the land and cave within it. In the East, even today, people are famous for bargaining the price of anything. The owner usually sets a price which is high, and the buyer offers a low price in return, and they meet in the middle. The bargaining for an object is considered a game in which great delight is taken by the bargainers. Most Westerners are not familiar with doing this. MacArthur states that *"A shekel weighed less than one-half ounce"* (p. 45). At today's silver prices ($17.00 per ounce), that would be $3,400. Henry says it is *"about fifty pounds,"* which would be $20,400 today. Other amounts are assigned by various writers with regard to the worth of four hundred shekels. These two examples serve to show that there is no consensus of a shekel's value today.

THOUGHT: A thought came to this writer as he studied these passages regarding the separation of GOD's people from those who are not His people. GOD has always commanded His people to be separate from those around them.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

GOD did not instruct His people to go live by themselves, having no contact with the rest of the world. What He did command was for His people not to participate in the sins of the ungodly around them. Just as GOD's people are to be separated in life, so are they in death. Abraham buried his dead physically, separated from the dead bodies of the heathen. But when one studies the Bible, he will realize that in death, there is a far greater separation which takes place. At death, the souls of all human beings are separated into one of two regions of Hades (realm of the dead). This is seen clearly in Luke 16:19ff. There, two men entered the realm of the dead (Hades), where they were separated by a great gulf which cannot be crossed from one side to the other (v. 26). Righteous Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom (Paradise, v. 22). The wicked rich man found himself on the other side of the gulf (Tartarus) being tormented. In this life, GOD's people must keep themselves pure from sin, so that they can be separated in death to rest in the bosom of Abraham.

Genesis 23:17-20 "And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the

field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth."

> "So the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the border thereof round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the children of Heth." (ASV)

Verses seventeen and eighteen show the legal framework for transferring the property from Ephron to Abraham. Note that a description of the owner was given with the details of the property so as to set boundaries. Note the legal aspect of the word "sure" — qum (*"to rise up, establish, strengthen"* – Zodhaites, CD). Everything was spelled out in the place where legal transactions of that time were done — the gates of the city. Note "in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city."

After Abraham bought this land, the burial of Sarah took place. Special note was made that this place later became known as Hebron. Later Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob would also be buried here (Genesis 25:9-10; 49:29-32; 50:13).

In considering this section, it would seem to this writer that the importance of Abraham's obtaining this place in the land he was promised was a matter of faith. It seems to be a statement that, though he and his descendants did not actually possess the land during his lifetime, yet GOD had promised it, and GOD always fulfills His promises. It should be considered that GOD's promises do not only encompass the time one physically lives — but far beyond that time. Consider also the words of Joseph before his death regarding the promises of GOD.

> "Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and GOD will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, GOD will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt"

(Genesis 50:24-26).

With regard to the above thought, let us remember that GOD has made a promise of a future "land" for those who trust in His promises.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in GOD, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Genesis chapter Twenty-four

Gen. 24:1-9 "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the GOD of Heaven, and the GOD of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD GOD of Heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; He shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age. And Jehovah had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his servant, the elder of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh. And I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the GOD of Heaven and the GOD of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land. Must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. Jehovah, the GOD of Heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my nativity, and who spake unto me, and who sware unto me, saying, Unto thy

> seed will I give this land. He will send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence. And if the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath. Only thou shalt not bring my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning this matter." (ASV)

Verse one declares that Abraham was now in advanced age (140 years). During all of this time, GOD has blessed Abraham with abundance in material things, but especially with the child of promise — Isaac. With regard to Isaac, Abraham had another obligation — to find him a wife. This wife cannot be any woman the servant might choose; she must not be a Canaanite woman. Why? Two reasons stand out: (1) The Canaanites had already shown a steady decline from GOD's law, and they must not be allowed to influence Isaac in a negative way. He knew of the curse placed upon the Canaanites in Genesis 9:25. Prohibitions were later given by GOD with regard to marrying outside of His people. Could it be that GOD gave Abraham this prohibition as well?

> "When the LORD thy GOD shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy GOD shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

(2) The bloodline needed to remain pure. In Rebekah, a family member who respected GOD and His laws, this could be achieved. Isaac was forty years old at this time (Gen. 25:20).

In those times, parents chose their children's mates. Marriages were arranged by the parents, usually through a mediator. Abraham's oldest and most trusted servant (possibly Eliezer) will handle this transaction for Abraham, but not without taking an oath to fulfill Abraham's desires. The oath involved putting his hand under Abraham's thigh. What does this mean? It is an obscure passage with no certainty of meaning for man today. The most widely accepted understanding of this practice is stated by Morris.

"All the ancient Jewish commentators understood this promise to be a euphemism for placing the hand under the male genital organ, and to have a symbolic meaning akin to that of circumcision" (p. 394).

The oath required of the servant really has two parts: (1) Under no circumstance was he to choose a wife of the Canaanites. (2) The wife had to be one from his own family. Note that the servant took the time to make sure he understood all of the implications of the oath he was about to take. This is a valid practice. Before one makes a promise of any kind, he should carefully consider all that that promise entails. Satisfied, the servant took the oath. It should also be noted that the language of this text shows that this was not simply an oath given to Abraham by the servant — GOD was involved.

"go unto my country" i.e., the country of Abraham's nativity. Thus, the city of Nahor is shown to be part of Mesopotamia from which Abraham was called. Further, Isaac was not to be taken back to this land, but rather remain all his life in the land to which GOD called Abraham.

Note the faith and trust Abraham exhibited toward GOD. Did he not have great reason to believe and trust Him? Note that the context starts with these words: "Abraham was old...and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things." He had seen all the promises GOD made to him come true, even when he did not know how such could come about. He saw the abundant care GOD had taken of him. Since Isaac was the son of promise through whom all the nations would be blessed, Abraham was certain GOD had a plan here. (It should be considered that GOD **may** have told Abraham where to seek a bride for Isaac.)

Consider this thought: Abraham had learned to trust GOD through seeing all of His promises to him come to pass. Christians today can also GOD's promises fulfilled in their lives. Thus, when Abraham was promised multitudes of descendants and one would bless the world he could accept it even though he never literally saw the nation come into existence. Christians today can also see GOD's promises fulfilled in their lives. He has richly cared for them even as He did Abraham, and He truly has treated everyone of us better than we deserve. Therefore when the discerning mind considers all of this, it will not be hard for him to accept that there is a home being prepared for him in eternity (John 14:2).

Abraham told the servant that GOD would send "His angel before thee." He relied upon GOD to provide this woman for his son. Is there a lesson here for one today? If one truly trusts GOD, trusts His providential care, he will not desert GOD when things do not happen as he thinks they should. His trust will without question say — **GOD will**

provide. This does not take away one's personal responsibility to do his part. Abraham did not wait for GOD to bring a bride to Isaac. He sent his representative to be ready to accept GOD's blessing when it was revealed.

Consider that this young woman was to leave her family and everything she had known to be the wife of Isaac. Is not this the same situation when one becomes a Christian? One who becomes a Christian becomes the bride of Christ.

> "ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto GOD" (Romans 7:4).

One who marries Christ is to leave everything behind in order to cleave to and obey Him. Pleasing one's spiritual husband **must** come before anyone and anything else in this world!

> "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:23-27).

Note should also be taken that the woman had a say in this, as implied by the servant — "peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land." Parents chose whom they thought would be a good mate for their child, but force would not be used to make Rebekah Isaac's wife. This is very different from the practice of Islam. She had a choice; thus, women were not simple chattel in those times (at least in Hebrew society). They had a choice in whether or not to marry the man chosen for them. Likewise, one is not forced to marry Christ; it is one's free-will choice to do so.

> "What therefore GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9).

Gen. 24:10-14 "And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O LORD GOD of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and

shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."

> "And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed, having all goodly things of his master's in his hand. And he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made the camels to kneel down without the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Jehovah, the GOD of my master Abraham, send me, I pray thee, good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the fountain of water. And the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink. And she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also. Let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac. And thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master." (ASV)

This servant had control of everything Abraham owned, so he picked what he needed to make this journey and make it successful. In those times, a dowry was given to the family of a bride, as well as the bride being bestowed with suitable gifts. The richer one was, the greater the amount of gifts to be given. Therefore, he took ten camels with the provisions they needed, as well as servants both to administer to the needs of all and provide protection from outlaws. This would have been a substantial caravan.

It should be remembered that Abraham had said the angel of the Lord would guide this servant to his destination (v. 7). Where did he take him? To the city of Nahor. This city originally was named Haran, and may have been changed to Nahor, or it may be that it simply refers to the place where Nahor settled and his family still resided. At any rate, the place was in the land of Mesopotamia, the original area from which Abraham came ("unto my country," v. 4). After arriving at this city he stopped at a well. No doubt the camels and men need water and rest.

At this well, the servant showed his piety toward GOD, as well as his concern for the well-being of his master. That he had come to believe in GOD, and trust Him, should come as no surprise, because GOD said Abraham would be a faithful teacher.

> "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

Note that he was concerned for his master, not his own well-being. It is obvious that he loved him and desired only that his master best interest be served.

> "kindness" — chesedh — *"is often translated in the KJV as 'lovingkindness' or 'mercy'. ChasRadh is a somewhat complicated concept, however, and not easily defined in a single word. The basic idea is that of an act of kindness, love or mercy shown to someone. The quality of the kindness shown is usually that reserved for close friends and family members, but the act of chasRadh can be shown to anyone. Thus, while chasRadh describes kindnesses shown to friends and relatives, it can also pass between guest and host, master and servant, or even ruler and subject. An act of chasRadh presupposes the existence of a relationship between the parties involved. Where no formal relationship has previously been recognized, the person exercising chasRadh has chosen to treat the recipient as if such a relationship did exist"* (Zodhiates, CD).

This servant had a mission to perform, and that is all he was concerned about. He was promised by Abraham that the Lord would guide him in this matter. His prayer shows he believed GOD would guide his choice. So how will he know when the right maiden comes to the well? A simple test was conceived — one who will not only provide the basic hospitality of providing a stranger with a drink, but will voluntarily offer to water his camels. This was not a small task, as a camel can drink up to twenty-five gallons of water (Grasham, Vol. 2, p. 37) — and there were ten of them.

> *"Such a young woman would be truly remarkable: one who was kind, hospitable, industrious, and willing to help an older stranger"* (IBID).

A side note here. The Bible has many water tests which determine a number of matters with regard to obedience and faithfulness to GOD. Gideon's water test, the Red Sea's parting, this text, Naaman, Peter, et cetera. But the greatest water test in the Bible is baptism.

> "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD" (John 3:3).

How does this birth take place? A water test.

> "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Immersed in what? After Philip taught the eunuch they came upon a body of water, whereupon the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). One is "born again" when he comes up out of that grave of water to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Gen. 24:15-22 “And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

> “And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her. And she went down to the fountain, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Give me to drink, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord. And she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all his camels. And the man looked stedfastly on her, holding his peace, to know whether Jehovah had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold,” (ASV)

Note the phrase “before he had done speaking.” This reminds this writer of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:20-21.

> “whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my GOD for the holy mountain of my GOD; Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.”

Consider with the promise given by GOD in Isaiah 65:24 regarding His people.

> “it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

One is reminded that GOD not only hears His servants' prayers but knows their needs before they utter a word. While the servant was engaged in his prayer, GOD sent Rebekah to him.

Note also that the text says she "went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up." The wells of that time were often dug down to the source of water, with stairs being provided. A person would go down the stairs, get their water in a pitcher, and then climb back up the stairs. After Rebekah had done this, the servant asked for water. Consider the physical endurance this would take for her to go up and down these stairs to provide the water for him and his camels. Yet, she did not hesitate to offer to water his animals. One dares to say, she probably did it with a smile on her face — she ran to get more water.

One should also observe that her service was rewarded generously. They had not bargained for her services. She probably expected nothing from her efforts, much less the very generous gift from this stranger.

> "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42).

This teaches a lesson about service. When service is rendered to another, gratitude should be shown by the one receiving that service. Gratitude was being shown by the servant to this maiden. Remember — at this point he did not know who she was, so his gift had nothing to do with trying to influence her to marry Isaac.

Gen. 24:23-27 "And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD GOD of my master Abraham, Who hath not left destitute my master of His mercy and His truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."

> "and said, Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee. Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed his head, and worshipped Jehovah. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the GOD of my master Abraham, Who hath not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master. As for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren." (ASV)

Now Abraham's servant asked the most important

question of the day — "Whose daughter art thou?" Abraham had told him to find his relatives and take a wife for Isaac from them (v. 4). Her answer declared her to be the granddaughter of Nahor, in fact the very one Abraham had heard about (22:23).

The second question in this text is whether or not there was room to entertain a stranger at their house. To this question she answered yes, and not only that, the needs of his camels would be provided. She had been raised in a generous household, which had apparently provided this courteous service to others.

The reaction of the servant to all of this — he prostrated himself in worship to GOD. Further, he apparently audibly thanked GOD for blessing Abraham in this way. With the emphasis, especially in that time, on lineage, Rebekah would have surely recognized the name Abraham. Further, he stated that it was GOD who led him to the family of Abraham, especially would that be true of Rebekah herself.

When one looks at this whole account, he can clearly see the providence of GOD. Does GOD lead His people through providence today? It would be this writer's understanding based on the Scriptures that He does, because He always has.

> "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6)

> "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in His way" (Psalm 37:23).

Whom will the Lord lead? Those who acknowledge His supremacy. This does not mean someone who simply says there is a GOD. It infers one who is obedient to His will, who allows his paths to be directed by GOD. It is the good man who allows his steps to be guided by GOD. It is the man who delights in GOD's word.

> "Delighteth" — <u>chaphets</u> — *"to find pleasure in, take delight in, be pleased with, have an affection for; to desire; to choose; to bend, bow"* (Zodhiates, CD).

> "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2).

> *"The Lord leads those who are in the way — that is, those who are in <u>His</u> way, who are wanting to be led, who will be led of Him, and who will do what He wants done"* (McGee, p. 100).

Gen. 24:28-32 "And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother,

and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him."

> "And the damsel ran, and told her mother's house according to these words. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the fountain. And it came to pass, when he saw the ring, and the bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me. That he came unto the man. And, behold, he was standing by the camels at the fountain. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of Jehovah. Wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house, and he ungirded the camels. And he gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men that were with him." (ASV)

Why did Rebekah run to tell this news first in "her mother's house?" In those times, the females often lived in their own tent, separate from the adult males. A daughter might naturally turn first to her mother in these circumstances. Further, where polygamy existed, each of these women would have had her own space. Some have speculated that Bethuel (her father) may have been dead. If so, then the Bethuel found in verse fifty was probably a son who had been named after his father. It does seem strange to our Western minds that Laban appears to be in charge of making all of the arrangements of hospitality and later negotiations. One will also notice later that it will be Jacob's sons who negotiated with Dinah's rapist and his father regarding a proposed marriage.

Laban is introduced in this chapter. Later he will be seen to a greater extent in his dealings with Jacob. Knowing that he is a greedy man who takes advantage of others from future accounts indeed shades our thinking here. But look at the context. It is common in Hebrew writing to give a statement of an event's happening and then details about the event. Laban ran out to Abraham's servant (v. 29). What motivated him to run to him? Verse thirty seems to indicate it was because of the rich gifts which had been given to his sister. Let one remember that GOD does not say something in His word which is useless information. There is a purpose for everything GOD says. It would appear that GOD is setting the stage with regard

to the character of Laban which is seen in more detail later.

Abraham's servant was invited into the dwelling place. Notice the order of hospitality. First, the animals are cared for; second, the washing of the feet (cleaning up); third, food will be presented.

Gen. 24:33-49 "And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD GOD of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD GOD of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

"And there was set food before him to eat. But he said, I will not

eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And Jehovah hath blessed my master greatly. And he is become great. And he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old. And unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, Jehovah, before whom I walk, will send His angel with thee, and prosper thy way. And thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house. Then shalt thou be clear from my oath, when thou comest to my kindred. And if they give her not to thee, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the fountain, and said, O Jehovah, the GOD of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go. Behold, I am standing by the fountain of water. And let it come to pass, that the maiden that cometh forth to draw, to whom I shall say, Give me, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher to drink. And she shall say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels. Let the same be the woman whom Jehovah hath appointed for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder. And she went down unto the fountain, and drew. And I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also. So I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him. And I put the ring upon her nose, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed my head, and worshipped Jehovah, and blessed Jehovah, the GOD of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me. That I may turn to the right hand, or to the left." (ASV)

Abraham's servant simply recounted to the family the facts they needed, as well as an account of all he had done. The only thing new in this section is the last verse, where he basically told them that, if they would not give him Rebekah to tell him, so he could look elsewhere for a bride.

Gen. 24:50-58 "Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and

tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go."

> "Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from Jehovah. We cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as Jehovah hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself down to the earth unto Jehovah. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night. And they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten. After that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing Jehovah hath prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." (ASV)

Note the commendable attitude of Laban and Bethuel — when GOD has spoken, there is nothing else to be said. It is unfortunate that so many who profess to be Christians do not have this attitude today. Too many claim to love GOD and then argue with what He has said or try to find a supposed "loop-hole" around His words.

> "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

By doing so, they show that they **DO NOT LOVE GOD!** In this text, they agreed that GOD had spoken, His providence being overwhelmingly visible to them in these events.

Why was Laban the primary spokesman if Bethuel is still alive? (Josephus states that the Bethuel of this passage is a younger brother of Laban.) In our society, if one asks permission to marry, he asks the father of the bride-to-be. It is then the father of the bride who gives her hand in marriage.

> *"In that society a woman's brother gave his sister in marriage, which explains why Laban, Rebekah's brother, was the negotiator in this marriage contract"* (Cook, p. 67).

In verse fifty-one, it may appear at first glance that Rebekah had no choice in this matter. As has already been pointed out, she could have refused the offer of marriage, and this context further shows her ability to make

decisions about this event. The thing which should be noticed in this verse is the phrase "as the Lord hath spoken." They were simply bowing to the will of GOD. Again, this should be the attitude which everyone should have, regardless of any personal feelings to the contrary. If man would have this attitude with regard to GOD's marriage laws, there would be far fewer divorces and adulterous marriages in this *"Christian nation."*

The reaction of Abraham's servant to their words was predictable. His mission has been thus far completed through GOD's merciful providence. So what did he do? The only thing a man of GOD can do — prostrated himself before the GOD of Heaven in humble worship. Three times in this chapter one finds this humble servant do just as his master would have done, praising GOD for His loving favor (24:12-14, 26-27, 52). No doubt during his travel to this land, he had often involved himself in prayer regarding this and other matters.

Now that they have given their approval, the servant bestowed rich gifts in abundance to Rebekah and her family. Some have falsely alleged that he was buying Rebekah as a bride. A dowry was given to prove the financial stature and responsibility of the groom in providing for his bride and future children. It was not a purchase price. After the gifts are given, they could then eat.

The next morning the family was obviously surprised at the servant's request to be released by them to return to Abraham's house. They requested ten days before he left (The LXX reads, *"a few days."*). It is quite possible that they realized that they would never see Rebekah again. After all, Abraham had never returned to their land, and he had absolutely refused to allow Isaac to return to this land. Like any loving family, they would have wanted time to say their good-byes and get used to the idea of her marriage. Time can sometimes be an enemy, which allows one to procrastinate. The time to obey GOD is now — not at some future date. Take Abraham's example in the sacrifice of his son as an example (Genesis 22).

> "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

The servant appealed to the fact that the Lord had prospered his way in all of this, possibly implying that it is the Lord's will to complete this task as quickly as possible. Rebekah was called and basically given the option of leaving immediately or at a future date. Rebekah fully understood it was the Lord's will for this marriage to take place, so she answered, "I will go." How do we answer the Lord's will today? He has clearly told His servants that they are to go take the message of the saving Gospel to

the world. Are opportunities taken advantage of today, or is procrastination the norm? GOD has clearly given instructions for elders to keep the bride of Christ (the church) pure through discipline. Do elders put off doing what GOD says to another day with regard to discipline, allowing the leaven of sin to grow in congregations so that more souls are lost to Satan? If so, they clearly show that they do not love GOD, nor do they love the souls of people!

Gen. 24:59-60 "And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

> "And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in this passage is that Rebekah and her nurse are "sent away." The original here is salah, which is *"A verb meaning to send forth, to send away; to let go, to put"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1146). It would seem in this text that once Rebekah was consulted about what she wanted to do, they forget their request to wait a few days and let the servant take her.

It is also noticed that she has a "nurse." This is yanaq, *"A verb meaning to care for, to nurse, to suckle"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 452). Considering that Rebekah is of marrying age, this would refer to a servant who attended to her needs.

Note the blessing they bestow upon Rebekah, i.e., their wishes for her. It is not uncommon to desire that one who is marrying might have many children. But notice the blessing carefully. Do they have knowledge of the blessing promised to Abraham (22:17)? If so, then they learned it from Abraham's servant.

Gen. 24:61-67 "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent,

and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

> "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man. And the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of Beer-lahai-roi. For he dwelt in the land of the South. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel. And she said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master. And she took her veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." (ASV)

After the blessings were given, they mounted the camels and began their journey to her new home. It is noticed that there is no record of what happened on the servant's journey to Abraham's homeland — he leaves and then he arrives. The same is true of the journey home — they leave and they arrive. Why? Because whatever events did occur are not germane to this account. The Bible does not tell everything about which one might be curious, but what is needed to be comforted by the Scriptures, lead one to trust GOD, and gain eternal salvation. (There are many things about which this writer is curious, but which GOD does not deem necessary to his salvation.)

As the caravan approached its destination, Isaac was found coming from Lahai-roi. This is the place where the angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar after she fled from Sarah (Genesis 16:7, 14). He was returning from the fields where he had been meditating. He saw a caravan coming and drew near to it. The text shows that Rebekah asked who this man was, and upon being told that it was Isaac, she alighted from the camel. She also adorned herself with a vale. This was a covering for the head but was also often large enough to cover the entire body. It was the custom for a bride to vale herself when she met her husband. This was also how Jacob was later deceived into marrying the wrong woman (Genesis 29). The vale was also a sign of modesty as well as respect for her husband.

Before moving away from this chapter, let us note some thoughts from Goddard regarding Rebekah and Isaac as types. The reader might find these interesting.

Rebekah Foreshadows the Church

"1. Her marriage was planned long before she knew about it (Eph. 1:3-4).

2. She was necessary for the accomplishment and completion of God's purpose (Eph. 1:23).

3. She was to share the glory of the son (John 17:22-23).
4. She learned of the son through his emissary and we through emissary of the word.
5. She immediately left all to go to the son (1 Pet. 1:8).
6. She journeyed through the wilderness to meet him, guided by the servant (1 Pet. 1:3-9).
7. She was loved by, and finally united forever to the son (Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 19:7; 1 Thess. 4:17).” (p. 286).

Isaac as a Type of Christ

“1. Isaac was promised long before his coming, as was Christ (Luke 1:70).
2. Isaac finally appeared at the appointed time, so did Jesus (Gal. 4:4).
3. Isaac was conceived and born miraculously, as, in a similar manner, was Jesus.
4. Isaac was assigned an appropriate name by God before his birth, as was Jesus.
5. Isaac was offered up in sacrifice by his father, as was Jesus (1 John 2:2).
6. Isaac was himself obedient unto death, so was Jesus (Phil. 2:8).
7. Isaac became the head of a great nation and was a blessing to all people, as was Jesus (Eph. 1:19-23)” (IBID)

One might add to the above list by noting that Isaac was brought back from the dead, as was Christ (Hebrews 11:18-19; Ephesians 1:19-23).

Genesis — Chapter Twenty-five

Gen. 25:1-4 “Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.”

> “And Abraham took another wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian: Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.” (ASV)

After Sarah’s death, and seemingly after Isaac was married — Abraham took another wife, Keturah. Who is

Keturah? From where did she come? The Scriptures simply do not state the answers to these questions. One thing which can be assumed is that he did not marry a Canaanite, based on his opposition to such for his son. A list of the sons and grandsons is given through Keturah.

Gen. 25:5-8 "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."

> "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, that Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts. And he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, a hundred threescore and fifteen years. And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people." (ASV)

> "And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east. This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people." (NKJV)

The inheritance of Isaac was secured — he received all. What about the children born through Abraham's concubines (Hagar and Keturah)? They were sent east (Arabia). Considering the generous and righteous nature of Abraham, it is assumed they were given enough to get started in a new location. The word "concubines" is used to show a secondary status. His primary wife had been Sarah, and any other wife he took would then have been "second" to her. There is a lesson to be learned here regarding care for those one brings into this world. They are to be taken care of by those who cause them to be born! Those who abandon the children they bring into this world are to be pitied as those who have no natural affection. The apostle Paul speaks of such people in Romans 1:31.

> "without natural affection" — ἄστοργος — *"hard hearted towards kindred: – without natural affection...unloving"* (Thayer, CD).

The life-span and death of Abraham are now given. He lived to the ripe old age of one hundred seventy-five years. The text says he died "in a good old age" as prophesied.

> "thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be

buried in a good old age" (Genesis 15:15).

The meaning of the word "good" is interesting.

> twot *"It means good, pleasant, beautiful, excellent, lovely, delightful, convenient, joyful, fruitful, precious, sound, cheerful, kind, correct, righteous; the good, the right, virtue, happiness, pleasantness. It may refer to practical or economic benefits, wisdom, aesthetic or sensual goodness, happiness, or preference. An important meaning of the term is moral goodness, as contrasted with moral evil"* (Zodhiates, CD).
>
> *"An adjective meaning good, well-pleasing, fruitful, morally correct, proper, convenient"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 399).

This word shows that Abraham's life was fulfilled, i.e., his expectations had been completed. This is made more manifest when one looks ahead and notices that GOD's faithful servants are portrayed as being "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). In that same context, the evil rich man said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me" (v. 24). He recognized the fatherhood of Abraham in two senses: (1) racial fatherhood and (2) spiritual fatherhood from which he was excluded. Thus the idea of Abraham's being the father of the faithful is presented.

The phrase "was gathered to his people" should also be considered. The original word for people (am) is plural. This cannot refer simply to being buried in the family burial plot, for the only one buried there thus far was Sarah. It appears to be a reference to life after death.

> *"The common assertion that the Pentateuch knows nothing of life hereafter and of the resurrection from the dead is merely a preconceived error"* (Leupold, p. 695).

Concerning knowledge of life after death, one should consider Hebrews 11:13-16.

> "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore GOD is not ashamed to be called their GOD: for He hath prepared for them a city" (Emphasis mine, RK).

The faithful patriarchs knew about life after death and lived their lives so as to obtain an eternal inheritance with GOD.

At the point of death, Abraham's spirit left his body and entered the realm of Sheol *["(Heb., 'the all-demanding world' = Gr. Hades, 'the unknown region'), the invisible world of departed souls"]* (Easton's Bible Dictionary, CD).

Genesis 25:9-11 "And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that GOD blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi."

> "And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre. The field which Abraham purchased of the children of Heth. There was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that GOD blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi." (ASV)

At his death, Abraham's sons were brought together. What brought them together? Was it simply the death of a beloved father? Had they reconciled to one another before this time? Or was this a temporary truce between them? The only indication the Bible gives is that they helped each other bury their father.

Abraham's deserted body was buried in the cave he bought from Ephron, alongside the body of his beloved wife, Sarah. Next, a brief statement was made that shows Isaac was blessed by GOD. The blessings promised to Abraham were "transferred" to Isaac at Abraham's death. But before the account of his life is given, a brief history of Ishmael is given. Regarding this account, McGee offers the following interesting thoughts.

> *"I call to your attention again the fact that the Holy Spirit uses this method in the book of Genesis. The rejected line is given first and then set aside and not mentioned anymore. Then the line that is leading to Christ is given and followed. So it is after the line of Ishmael is given that we come to the line of Isaac"* (p. 105).

One can look back to Genesis chapter four and see another clear example of McGee's above thoughts. Cain's lineage is mentioned, and then he disappeared from the Genesis record.

Gen. 25:12-18 "Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham: And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, And Mishma, and Dumah, and

Massa, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren."

> "Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham. And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth, and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, Hadad, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their villages, and by their encampments. Twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirty and seven years. And he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria. He abode over against all his brethren." (ASV)

Concerning Ishmael, Abraham was told, "the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed" (21:13). In the present text it is seen, as usual, that GOD kept his promise. Twelve princes were born to him, who became the heads of twelve nations.

The death of Ishmael is also given, and his age at that time is set at one hundred thirty-seven years.

This will end volume one of this commentary. The break may seem awkward, but it is done because, beginning with the next verse, the book of Genesis is primarily concerned with the life of Issac.

Genesis 25

Gen. 25:19-24 "And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb."

> "And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian, to be his wife. And Isaac entreated Jehovah for his wife, because she was barren. And Jehovah was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her. And she said, If it be so, wherefore do I live? And she went to inquire of Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, And two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people. And the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb." (ASV)

This volume of comments on Genesis begins with the toledoth (generations or history) of Isaac. It seems noteworthy that Rebekah is shown to be a Syrian (Aramean) from Padanaram.

> *"A country, a cultivated fertile district of Mesopotamia, at the foot of the mountainous region in which stood Haran, the city of Nahor"* (JFB, p. 188).

Isaac is shown to be forty years old when he and Rebekah were married, three years after Sarah's death (Note 17:17 and 23:1 with the age of Isaac.). Jacob and Esau would be born twenty years later (v. 26) after much prayer ("intreated") for this blessed event.

Rebekah's pregnancy was not an easy one. Those who experience carrying a child for the first time are often concerned that what they experience may not be normal. In Rebekah's case, there were more than the normal things to consider — for the "children struggled together within her."

"struggled" — rasas — *"A verb meaning to break; to crush; to oppress. It is used of infants tussling while still in the womb, pushing on each other"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1075).

The conflict which would later be evident to all had already begun within Rebekah's womb. Rebekah is alarmed at all the activity within her womb and questions, "If all is well, why am I like this" (NKJV)?

With her concern at these events, she does what anyone of faith would do — she enquired of the Lord. Further, the text says that she "went" to enquire. Many have speculated as to where she went. Some think it was Melchisedec, a prophet; Abraham (lived 16 years after the twins' birth); Mount Moriah; or Isaac, who was the head of the family which acted as priest in those times. What really matters here is that she sought her information from GOD. Through what medium GOD responded to her is of little importance. Her prayer was heard, for GOD revealed four things to her: (1) She was baring twins, (2) They would become two nations, (3) The one would be stronger than the other, and (4) The first born would serve the second born.

> "when Rebekah also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of GOD according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Malachi 1:2).
>
> "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with GOD? GOD forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9:10-15).

Gen. 25:25-26 "And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them."

> "And the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment. And they called his name Esau. And after that came forth his brother, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them." (ASV)

"Esau" — *"hairy"* (Morris, p. 414); *"red"* (McGee, p. 106).

"Jacob" — *"heel-catcher...supplanter"* (Morris, p. 414); *"supplanter"* (Henry, p. 46); *"heel-catcher, supplanter, tripper-up"* (JFB, p. 189); *"may He (God) protect"* (Cook, p. 69); *"defraud, deceive, to supplant, i.e., to overthrow a person by tripping up his heels"* (Clarke, p. 160).

> "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with GOD" (Hosea 12:3).

As can be seen above, there is much dispute about the meaning of Jacob's name. Isaac is said to be sixty years old, thus showing that he and Rebekah had been married for twenty years at this time.

Gen. 25:27-28 "And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob."

> "And the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field. And Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison. And Rebekah loved Jacob." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in this section is a description of Jacob and Esau once they are grown. Esau is described as a skilled hunter, a man who appears to have spent most of his time in the fields and wild areas. Jacob is described as a "plain man" (KJV), "quiet man" (ASV), and "mild man" (NKJV). None of these terms do justice to the original word as noted below.

> "Plain" — <u>tam</u> — *"It means complete, whole, upright (always in a moral sense)"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"An adjective meaning integrity, completeness. This is a rare, almost exclusively poetic term often translated perfect but not carrying the sense of totally free from fault"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1230).

This is the same word used of Job.

> "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect (<u>tam</u>) and upright, and one that feared GOD, and eschewed evil" (1:1).

The character of these two boys is very different from one another. This was the difference GOD saw while they were in the womb and why He chose Jacob to carry the lineage of the Messiah. Jacob quickly is shown to care about spiritual matters, while Esau's interest was in physical things.

The text also shows the partiality which developed

in the household of Isaac. Isaac favored Esau, while Rebekah favored Jacob.

"Just as mothers are wont to love the sons who are of a more quiet and friendly disposition rather than those who are wild and bold, so fathers love those sons who are a bit more lively and bold" (Luther, quoted by Leupold, Vol. 2, p. 710).

When parents show partiality between their children, there will always be problems as a result.

What was the basis for their partiality? In Isaac's case, it was the wild game that Esau provided for him. Notice the emphasis on the sensual. No reason is given for Rebekah's preference. It may be simply the disposition of Jacob toward living a settled life. This writer believes it may have been based on the knowledge given to her by GOD regarding Jacob. GOD had chosen him to lead the family and receive the blessings promised in the past to Abraham and Isaac.

Gen. 25:29-34 "And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."

> "And Jacob boiled pottage. And Esau came in from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage. For I am faint. Therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die. And what profit shall the birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me first. And he sware unto him. And he sold his birthright unto Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils. And he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright." (ASV)

Jacob is said to "sod pottage," i.e., he was boiling some food. It may have been a soup or stew, or something similar. At any rate, it must have really appealed to Esau's senses, because when he came in from the field, he greatly desired it. The Bible also says that Esau was "faint."

"faint" — ayep — *"An adjective meaning faint, weary, exhausted. It describes a person*

becoming weak from hard work and needing nourishment; or from exhausting travels, escapes" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 830).

Esau is hungry and tired, so he asks Jacob for some of his pottage. The word "pottage" is not found in the text of verse twenty-nine. This shows that Esau simply called it "red," apparently from its color. Today, one might say, *"Give me some of that red stuff,"* if he did not know what it was called. The text shows that he was then given the name "Edom," which also means "red" (Strong). It is not uncommon, even in this country, for someone to be given a nickname because of some event in his life and later for that nickname to be the only name that person is known by. This writer had a friend whom every one knew as *"Harry."* It was the only name by which he was known. Unfortunately he died, and at the funeral home it was discovered that his real name was Christopher. Those who descended from Esau became known as the Edomites.

Hospitality would have demanded that Jacob give a tired stranger some of the food he had prepared or even to prepare some food for him. Remember the account of Abraham and the three "strangers" who appeared at his tent (Genesis 18). What is seen here is a lack of compassion — not for a stranger but for Jacob's own brother. Jacob demands a price for his pottage — the birthright. Easton states the following about the "firstborn."

(1.) This word denotes the special privileges and advantages belonging to the first-born son among the Jews. He became the priest of the family. Thus Reuben was the first-born of the patriarchs, and so the priesthood of the tribes belonged to him. That honour was, however, transferred by God from Reuben to Levi (Num. 3:12, 13; 8:18).

(2.) The first-born son had allotted to him also a double portion of the paternal inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17). Reuben was, because of his undutiful conduct, deprived of his birth-right (Gen. 49:4; 1 Chr. 5:1). Esau transferred his birth-right to Jacob (Gen. 25:33).

(3.) The first-born inherited the judicial authority of his father, whatever it might be (2 Chr. 21:3). By divine appointment, however, David excluded Adonijah in favour of Solomon.

(4.) The Jews attached a sacred importance to the rank of 'first-born'" (CD).

It should also be noted that, in the case presented in this text, it also meant this is the one through whom the Messianic blessing would come.

One should also observe that this whole affair had already been determined. Therefore, Jacob was attempting to buy what already belonged to him through GOD's decree, and Esau was supposedly selling something which did not belong to him.

Verse thirty-two reveals the true character of Esau. His basic thought is, *"I am about to die (or going to die), so what good is this birthright to me?"* First it is noticed that he does not have an understanding of the true value of things. To him the birthright was nothing more than a piece of property which he could sell to get what he really wanted. Thus, it is seen that he did not have an understanding or regard for holy things (spiritual things). Second, this shows that like so many, Esau lived for the moment and not the future. The time will come in the future when he will have a better understanding of the value assigned to the birthright and desire it.

> "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept" (Genesis 27:38).

The Holy Spirit directed Paul to say that Esau was a "profane person...who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Hebrews 12:16).

> "Profane" — βέβηλος — *"from baínoM, to go, and bemlos, a threshold, particularly of a temple, so that bébeMlos properly denoted one who either was or ought to have been debarred from the threshold or entrance of a temple. Unhallowed, the opposite of hierós, sacred. Profane, void of religion or piety"* (Zodhiates, CD).

Esau was the kind of person who thought the only thing which really mattered was what he was experiencing right then. To him the only thing that was really important was the physical. He was selfish and did not consider the welfare of the generations which would follow him.

It should also be observed that both Esau and Jacob showed a lack of faith in this transaction. Neither Jacob or Esau believed that GOD was capable of taking care of them. There can be little doubt that Jacob and Esau knew the prophecy given to their mother regarding these twins. Jacob apparently thought he had to help GOD make that prophecy come true — he did not wait for GOD to fulfill it in his own time and in his own way. This attitude had caused great heartache to his

grandparents — Abraham and Sarah — when they tried to help GOD out regarding a promised heir. Neither had Jacob nor his grandparents had enough faith to wait for the Lord to act. As always, when man attempts to help GOD, out it will at the least cause problems and even disaster.

What lesson can be learned from this event of history? Even when there is something right which GOD desires, man is courting and will receive disaster when he tries to help GOD out. Man should not have the arrogant attitude which basically says, *"GOD does not have the ability to accomplish this, so in 'my wisdom' I will show Him how it should be done."* Does GOD want everyone in the world to be saved?

> "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

What tool does GOD say is the only tool powerful enough to lead man to salvation?

> "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

How does man reason? The "plain old Gospel" has been taught diligently, but people are not responding to it. If some are responding, it is only a very few. GOD's way is apparently not working, so let's build gymnasiums, have dinners, show movies, offer physical excitement and spectacular events, et cetera, to "get them saved." Such gimmicks may inflate numbers, but they do not promote spirituality or saved souls! Such gimmicks promote carnality and lost souls! Why? Because the organizers and participants are not doing it GOD's way, with the tool GOD has provided.

Jacob even demanded an oath from Esau, because he knew that once the oath was given, it could not be retracted. But again, an oath did not matter, because GOD had already determined this matter. The birthright, with all of its blessings, was already determined to belong to Jacob.

Further, notice the attitude of Esau once he had eaten. He simply got up and walked away without a seeming care in the world. He had just traded away the most valuable possession he had for a fairly worthless item.

Genesis 26

Gen. 26:1-5 "And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And

Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

> "And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar. And Jehovah appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee. For unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (ASV)

Two famines are listed in verse one. The first was endured in the days of Abraham (Genesis 12), when he took his family to Egypt. This famine takes place approximately one hundred years later. Another major famine will occur during the time of Jacob.

Why did the Lord appear to Isaac and tell him not to go to Egypt? Was it Isaac's initial intention to go to Egypt as Abraham had done? Was there more danger to Isaac and his family if they had gone to Egypt, and GOD is sparing them? Whatever the reason, GOD wants to make sure Isaac does not go to Egypt, so He dealt directly with him.

Next GOD gave Isaac the same covenant that He had with Abraham — the same promises are renewed. GOD says, *"You do what I tell you to do (obey Me), and I will (1) bless you, (2) give you this land, (3) multiply your descendants so that they cannot be counted, and (4) bless all nations through your seed (the Messiah)."*

Just here seven parallels that Cook sees between Abraham and Isaac are offered for the reader's consideration.

> *"(a) a famine (cf. 12:10); (b) a plan to go to Egypt (cf. 12:11); (c) the stay in Gerar (cf. 20:1); (d) out of fear calling his wife his 'sister' (cf. 12:12-13; 20:2, 11); (e) the wife's beauty (12:11, 14); (f) Abimelech's concern about committing adultery*

(20:4-7); and (g) Abimelech's rebuke (20:9-10)" (p. 70).

Who was this Abimelech (*"my father is king"* – Grasham, Vol. 2, p. 100)? There are three possibilities: (1) a young king that Abraham had contact with, (2) the first Abimelech's son, or (3) Abimelech's grandson. The term "Abimelech" is believed by most to be the title of the Philistine kings of that time, much like the term "Pharaoh" (*"great house"* – IBID) for the rulers of Egypt.

Verse five gives the reason why these promises made to Abraham are renewed with Isaac. Basically, it is because Abraham obeyed GOD. This reminds one of another son who was blessed exceedingly because of the father's faithfulness to GOD — Solomon (1 Kings 3).

Gen. 26:6-11 "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

> "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked him of his wife. And he said, She is my sister. For he feared to say, My wife. Lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah. Because she was fair to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife. And how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die because of her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might easily have lain with thy wife, and thou wouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all the people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death." (ASV)

When Isaac went to live in Gerar because of the famine, he became guilty of the same sin Abraham had committed. The men of the city obviously asked about

the relationship between Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac, like Abraham, lied and said she was his sister. Apparently they were able to conceal the truth "a long time." Isaac used the same reasoning his father had, saying that she was beautiful and the men might kill him in order to have her for themselves.

Their deception came to an end when the king looked out one day and saw Isaac and Rebekah "sporting." This word is defined by Strong as *"to laugh, mock, play"* (tsachaq). For one to laugh or mock with his sister would not signify that they were married, so the definition of "play" must be the correct one here. However it was that they were playing, it was obvious that it was something a brother and sister would not be doing. Further, one should observe the word "lien" which the king used.

> "lien" — sakab — *"A verb meaning to lie down, to sleep...It is used of sexual intercourse"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1134).

The king used this word to signify that if one of his people had done this, they would have been guilty of adultery. Further, if they had, then he implied that the entire city would have suffered. This indicates that the crime of adultery was considered to be a very serious thing among the Philistines at this time in their history. It may also be a remembrance of what had happened earlier when Abraham told the same lie (20:17-18). To emphasize how strongly he felt, Abimelech issued a decree that if any one harmed either Isaac or Rebekah, they were to be put to death.

One of the great lessons to be learned in this (as well as the account of Abraham) is that people should not be judged by what one "thinks" they might do or what kind of people they might be. Too often people are guilty of attributing attitudes and actions to others that are not warranted, as did Isaac here.

It is quite puzzling to this writer as to why Isaac would sacrifice the honor of his wife if she had been taken by one of these men. Further cowardice on his behalf is seen by being willing to sacrifice her to save himself. Most importantly is the lack of faith he had in GOD's promise to take care of him. Isaac was not a perfect man without sin, for all have sinned and come short of GOD's glory. GOD does not hide the sins of His own people.

Another thing to consider here is that there is hope for those who sin. Abraham and Isaac became great men by overcoming their sins, and a Christian who falls can do the same thing. One must not give up when he sins; rather he should recognize his fault, repent and

ask for GOD's forgiveness, learn from his error, and become a more godly person (better servant) tomorrow than he was in the past.

Gen. 26:12-17 "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there."

> "And Isaac sowed in that land, and found in the same year a hundredfold. And Jehovah blessed him. And the man waxed great, and grew more and more until he became very great. And he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household. And the Philistines envied him. Now all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped, and filled with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us. For thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and encamped in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there." (ASV)

It should be remembered and emphasized that there was a famine in the land. Yet, Isaac's crops were increased a hundredfold, and his herds and flocks increased as well. GOD had promised him blessings for obedience. He stayed in the land where GOD wanted him and, even though others were barely getting by, he prospered greatly. Note also that his servants multiplied as well, and these would be loyal to him in time of conflict and would be used — as Abraham's were — to fight for Isaac. What was the result of Isaac's blessings? Envy and fear.

> "envy" — qana — "the cognate Arabic root means to become very red. Therefore, because of the redness of one's face when experiencing emotion, this Hebrew verb means to be jealous; to be envious" (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to be jealous, to be envious, to be zealous...The point of the verb is to express a strong emotion in which the subject is desirous of some aspect or possession of the object. It can express jealousy, where persons are zealous for their own property or positions for fear they might lose them; or envy, where persons are zealous for the*

property or positions of others, hoping they might gain them" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1000).

As can be seen by the definitions above, this word can have either a good or bad connotation. In this case it is a bad one. Unfortunately, many become envious of those who have more of this world's material blessings than they do.

"I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 4:4).

A secret to not being envious is to put one's trust and focus in/on the Lord and be thankful for what he has instead of what he does not have.

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:10-12).

The Bible teaches a great deal about the wrong kind of envy, warning man to avoid it. The Bible says envy is a "rottenness of the bones" and warns against envying "sinners" (Proverbs 14:30; 23:17). Further, Job shows that envy belongs to one who is silly (Job 5:2).

"Public envy is an ostracism that eclipseth men when they grow too great" (Bacon, quoted by Clarke, p. 164).

Because of their envy, what action did the Philistines take? They filled the wells that Abraham had dug. Did they fill these wells while Isaac dwelt among them, or is this a preview of what happened when Isaac moved down the valley? In that land, water is absolutely critical because of the arid conditions. As the old saying goes, they *"cut off their nose to spite their face."* They denied themselves a needed source of water. Indeed, "envy slayeth the silly one" (Job 5:2).

The need for water has caused many a conflict down through the ages and still goes on today. Tensions were indeed rising, so Abimelech asks Isaac to leave the area. Why did he ask this? Why did he not just drive Isaac out? The answer seems to be fear of Isaac, for Isaac had become "much mightier than we." GOD had made Isaac mightier than the Philistines, and it appears that Abimelech had some concept of that fact. Isaac, instead of resisting, instead of demanding

his “rights,” moved away from the city. Rather than initiate conflict because he was being wronged, Isaac chose a path of peace. GOD had blessed him before, and he knew GOD would continue to bless him — so he moved. One should note the instructions to avoid conflict which Paul gave the Corinthians.

> “Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren” (1 Corinthians 6:7-8).

> “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:18-19).

It is not easy to “turn the other cheek” in such instances, but such action can avoid much trouble, and it can cause others to consider and even come to obey the GOD Christians serve.

Gen. 26:18-22 “And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

> “And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father. For the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. And he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours. And he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. And they digged another well, and they strove for that also. And he called the name of it Sitnah. And he removed from thence, and digged another well. And for that they strove not. And he called the name of it Rehoboth. And he said, For now Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in

the land." (ASV)

After leaving Gerar, Isaac goes to the "valley of Gerar," which Crawford states was about fifty miles distant. There he opened the wells which his father had dug long ago when in this same area. Why did he have to reopen these wells? Because when Abraham left this area, the Philistines filled the wells up. Why would they do such a thing to something so valuable? Speculation says they may not have had enough people to use these areas, yet did not want someone else moving in on their territory. As Isaac "re-dug" those wells, he called them by their former names. This would re-establish his right to them through Abraham and the covenant he had made with the first Abimelech. It is noted that the strife did not come until he dug a new well.

Many wells are dug and filled with water by seepage. But this well was a living well, i.e., it was an artesian well. This writer once had a well of this type, and his neighbors had the former kind. During dry times, the neighbors wells would often go dry, but the artesian well did not. Artesian wells are greatly desired, especially in such a dry area as in this text. When the Philistines fussed over this well, instead of fighting for what was his, Isaac yielded and moved on. Most people would have fought for this well (this writer probably would have fought, too). Some would accuse Isaac of being a pacifist to the extreme, or worse — a coward. But there is something else going on here which is expressed well by Coffman.

> *"When disputes arose, Isaac resolved them by yielding and moving to another place, trusting Jehovah, rather than taking things into his own hands and engaging in armed conflict"* (p. 336).

This writer believes this is another way in which Isaac was a type of the Christ. When one observes the actions of Jesus, he does not see Him waging war to accomplish His goals. When the Jews of His day rejected Him, He moved on. When they put Him to death, He allowed it. When asked about His kingdom, Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

> "whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them...they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium" (Luke 9:5; Acts 13:51).

It should be remembered that Abraham, many years before this time, had been able to raise a small army from his own servants of three hundred and eighteen men. Abraham had grown even more prosperous after that, and now Isaac has grown to have a "great store of servants" (v. 14). He could have called upon these servants to fight and very possibly could have conquered the Philistines, driving them out of this land. When the mob came to arrest Jesus in the garden, Peter cut off the ear of Malchus. Jesus told him to put up his sword, i.e., *"This is not how I am setting up My kingdom."* Listen to what Jesus said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). Jesus' kingdom was not to be established through war, nor is it to be maintained through such. Christians would do well to consider that point when matters of dispute come up which are not doctrinal in nature. In matters which are not doctrinal, it is better to suffer wrong and walk away (1 Corinthians 6:7-8). Is that not what Paul and Barnabas did in a dispute regarding Timothy (Acts 15:36ff)? It must be emphasized that if a doctrinal matter causes a dispute, then faithful Christians **must fight** to maintain GOD's word.

> "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, emphasis mine, RK).

When the Philistines contended for this well, Isaac moved on, but not before he names the well "Esek" (*"contention"*). At the new site of dwelling, Isaac's men dig another well, and again the Philistines contend over it. Again, Isaac is seen to give them the well and move on, and again he gave that well a name, "Sitnah" (*"hatred"*). The third time is the charm. Another well is dug over which the Philistines do not dispute. Isaac can now settle down in peace, so he names it "Rehoboth" (*"room"*). Isaac sought peace, and he found it — and GOD blessed him.

> "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Peter 3:10-11).

> "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:18).

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

"The idea behind the name 'Rehoboth' is ***'the Lord has made room for us'"*** (Grasham, p. 108).

Gen. 26:23-25 "And he went up from thence to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the GOD of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well."

"And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. And Jehovah appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the GOD of Abraham thy father. Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah, and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants digged a well." (ASV)

From the valley of Gerar, Isaac returns to Beer-sheba. Beer-sheba is where Abraham made a covenant with the first Abimelech and where Isaac lived after Abraham offered him on the mount.

"fear not" This phrase is mentioned immediately after GOD appeared to him. This appearance was probably sudden and unexpected, and such often causes (at least temporarily) fear. Many writers remark that GOD appeared to Isaac on this occasion to encourage him after all he endured from the Philistines. This writer puts forth this speculation: that GOD is rewarding him for the way he handled himself during these trials. Whatever the reason for GOD's speaking to Isaac at this time, one thing is clear, GOD renewed the covenant promise in an abbreviated fashion. It is again stated that blessings are being brought to Isaac because of GOD's "servant" — Abraham.

After receiving a renewal of the promises, Isaac responds by building an altar. Since an altar was a place of worship, the implication is that Isaac worshipped. This is the only time you find it mentioned that Isaac built an altar, but it should not be assumed that this is the only time he built one.

Everywhere Isaac went he seems to have dug a well. Water is a necessity for physical life, and one reminds himself that the water of life — GOD's word — is the water needed for spiritual life.

"whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

Another thing which may be considered is that when Isaac went back to Beer-sheba, he was surrounded by his own people and servants. When he was in contact with the Philistines, he was surrounded by those outside the family of GOD. Could the conflicts Isaac had gone through with the Philistines have been GOD working providentially to separate Isaac from these people? Being separated, there would be no temptation for his people to marry among the heathen and thus worship their gods, as inter-marriages often caused — then and now.

Gen. 26:26-33 "Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol the captain of his host. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore are ye come unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw plainly that Jehovah was with thee. And we said, Let there now be an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace. Thou art now the blessed of Jehovah. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another. And Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shibah. Therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day."

"Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day."

(ASV)

> "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).

After arriving in Beer-sheba, received a visit from Abimelech. He brought with him "Pichol" the commander of his army, and "Ahuzzath." The term Pichol does not seem to be a name but rather a title, possibly something similar to "General" today. As for the word "Ahuzzath" there is discussion as to its meaning something more than a simple name. Some believe this was a title of a respected counselor to the king (such as "Chief of Staff"). Others have argued that this original word refers to a company of friends.

Isaac's greeting is somewhat testy, being based upon the way the Philistines had treated him in the past. They had forced him away from the city by asking him to leave and then disputing his wells. Isaac wants to know why they have come to him, since they apparently hate him. Their answer is interesting and possibly implies several things. "We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee."

During times of drought, they had seen Isaac's crops and number continue to grow larger and larger in every area. Since this was not normally the way things happened, they saw the hand of Isaac's GOD involved. It is also obvious from past verses that they had come to fear Isaac because he was growing so rapidly in power. It should be remembered that in those times, the servants which cared for the flocks were also trained in combat. It was their job to defend the flocks and herds from predatory animals, thieves and invading armies. With the flocks growing, the number of these servants needed to care for them grew as well.

Because they saw Isaac's GOD protecting and increasing him, they wanted to make a non-aggression pact with him. They reminded Isaac that they had done no real harm to him and Rebekah and had sent them away in peace. Isaac graciously consented to making this treaty with them. Treaties in that time were often entered into after a feast, and such was the case here.

After these Philistines left, Isaac's servants came to him with exciting news. The well they had begun digging on their return to Beer-sheba had begun producing water. Isaac names the well "Shebah," which means *"an oath."* "Beer-sheba" means *"well of the oath."* History was repeating itself, since the first Abimelech had come to Beer-sheba to initiate a treaty with Abraham, and now this Abimelech had come to the

same place to initiate a treaty with Isaac. The name truly fits what had taken place here on two occasions.

Gen. 26:34-35 "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

> "And when Esau was forty years old he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah." (ASV)

Esau further demonstrates his unfitness for the blessings of the firstborn. He marries two Hittite women. Abraham had gone to great pains to show that marrying a Canaanite was contrary to godliness. The Canaanites worshiped idols, and thus their morals were on the decline. The lineage of the Messiah, even at this early date of the nation GOD was developing, was to remain pure.

For godly parents, it is always a great grief for their children to marry those who do not faithfully serve the GOD of Heaven.

> "grief" — morah — *"A feminine noun meaning grief, bitterness. It describes an emotional response of strong disappointment and sorrow of spirit over something"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 667).

Knowing how his parents and grandfather felt about marrying Canaanite women, why did Esau do this? The answer seems to be found in the nature of Esau, whom the Holy Spirit said was a "profane" person (Hebrews 12:16). Zodhiates shows that when this word is applied to a person, it means that he *"lacks all relationship or affinity to GOD"* (Zodhiates, CD). Esau simply did not care about spiritual matters as they relate to the GOD of Heaven. He probably had the same attitude many have today, which basically says religion does not matter, and therefore it does not matter how one worships. Esau did not care if his marriages hurt his family or GOD.

Genesis 27

Gen. 27:1-4 "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some

venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die."

> "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his elder son, and said unto him, My son. And he said unto him, Here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me venison. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat. That my soul may bless thee before I die." (ASV)

At the time of this account, Isaac was about one hundred and thirty-seven years old. He would live approximately another forty-three years. Why did Isaac feel that he might die soon? Was he suffering from some ailment, or had he become discouraged because of his blindness? Did he simply decide to do this now rather than later? Was Isaac considering that his half-brother, Ishmael, had died at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven, so he might be approaching the length of his own life? Had the events of Esau's selling his birthright recently happened, and Isaac was trying to give it to Esau any way? These questions will never be satisfactorily answered. Isaac did understand that human-beings do not live forever on this earth.

> *"He who lives not in reference to eternity, lives not at all"* (Clarke, Vol. 1, p. 167).

Isaac calls for Esau to come to him and assigns him the task of hunting for game to feed him a favorite dish. His purpose, as expressed in this meal, deals with his desire to "bless" Esau before his death. This particular blessing was very important, because it was not a mere desires one had for another. Instead it was prophetic and honored by GOD. This writer believes it entirely probable that GOD even directed the thoughts regarding this blessing in the patriarchal line. Great events of this time were often accompanied by a meal or feast.

Why was Isaac so determined to bless Esau? Did he not know of the blessing given to Rebekah by GOD regarding Jacob, or was he ignoring it? Did he not know that Esau had sold his birthright, or was he ignoring it? Did he forget the nature of Esau with regard to holy things, as exhibited by his marriage to Hittite women? Did he believe the action of selling the birthright was illegal and so intended to give it as custom dictated to the eldest son? It is this writer's opinion that Isaac deceived himself in some sense to believe that he could by-pass GOD's plans and bestow

the blessing upon his favorite son.

It should be remembered that this blessing was very important. It established the leadership of the family both in material and spiritual areas. GOD had chosen Jacob to lead in these areas — Isaac chose Esau.

Gen. 27:5-17 "And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob."

"And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savory food, that I may eat, and bless thee before Jehovah before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats. And I will make them savory food for thy father, such as he loveth. And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, so that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver. And I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son. Only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother. And his mother

made savory food, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took the goodly garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck. And she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob." (ASV)

"savory" — matam — *"A masculine noun meaning tasty food, delicacy. It indicates gourmet food, special tidbits, or delicacies; a specially prepared meal of tasty food"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 601).

Rebekah is determined that Jacob will receive what is rightfully his by GOD's determination. The problem is that she does not have enough faith to believe GOD can fulfill His promise without her help. There are several examples which can demonstrate that GOD will overcome man's attempts to nullify His desires. (1) Balaam and Balak (Numbers 22-24). Balak wanted the prophet of GOD (Balaam) to put a curse on the children of Israel. But every time Balaam tried to do this, GOD caused him to give them a blessing instead. (2) Saul thought he could stop David from being the next king by killing him, but every time he tried, GOD protected David (1 Samuel 16ff). (3) When Israel gave the blessing to Joseph's sons, he was blind. When they were brought before him, GOD directed his hands so that the younger got the greater blessing instead of the older. Israel was acting upon GOD's wishes, and Joseph could not change it (Genesis 48). In the case of Jacob and Esau, Esau could have brought the game back, dressed it, fixed it, and taken it Isaac — but GOD would have overridden Isaac's desire, and the blessing would have gone to Jacob. Man must learn that GOD will override man's plans any time they conflict with His plans. Man needs to learn simply to do whatever GOD tells him to do and leave the results in His hands.

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but GOD that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Why would Rebekah do this? Did she not realize the possibility of a major conflict because of her actions? Why would she risk a possible alienation of her husband? Why would she be willing to take a curse upon herself? She obviously falsely believed that the end justifies the means used to obtain the end. Morris offers an interesting possibility for her thinking.

"Rebekah knew she was taking a terrible risk of permanently alienating both Isaac and Esau by

this scheme, since it would only be a matter of a few hours at most before it would be discovered, and she knew that Jacob also would realize this. Isaac knew that Rebekah loved him, and he loved her. If he could be made to realize that God's will was so important that Rebekah (and Jacob, as well) was willing to sacrifice even his own love for it, then perhaps the shock would be the means of bringing him back to his senses and get him to realize his error" (p. 432).

One should also note why Jacob at first objected to Rebekah's plan. He did not object because of moral issues, i.e., it was simply wrong to lie to Isaac in this matter. He objected out of fear that he might receive punishment from Isaac for this deception. Jacob could have refused to obey his mother on this occasion and let GOD take care of this matter in his own way — but he did not. The reason Jacob thought he might be discovered and cursed is that though they were twins, they were very different. (1) Jacob was a "man of the village," where as Esau was a "man of the field." The smell of these two then would be very different. (2) Esau was a hairy man, while Jacob was not. Even if Jacob could deceive his father with his voice, he would be discovered by his smell and when Isaac touched him. Rebekah calmed Jacob's fears by putting some of Esau's clothes on him. Then she used the goats' skins to cover his arms and neck.

It should be remembered that the blessing spoken of in this context is more than a simple wish of a father for his son. This blessing was tied to GOD and dealt with the lineage which would lead to the coming Messiah. It was therefore extremely important. It cannot be doubted that GOD revealed things to the patriarchs when they gave their blessing. It should also be considered that once a curse or blessing had been given, it could not be taken back.

Some have thought that because GOD did not record in His word a condemnation of Rebekah and Jacob, that GOD must have approved of their actions. GOD often records things in His book from an historical perspective — whether right or wrong. Lying and deception are always wrong according to GOD's word.

Gen. 27:18-29 "And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How

is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy GOD brought it to me. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: Therefore GOD give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

"And he came unto his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I. Who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because Jehovah thy GOD sent me good speed. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father. And he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat. And he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son Is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed. And GOD give thee of the dew of heaven, And of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and new wine. Let peoples serve thee, And nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, And blessed be every one that blesseth thee." (ASV)

The current context necessitates an important question. Why did GOD not condemn Rebekah's, (and especially Jacob's) actions and words? Note that one of his lies invoked the name of GOD. What they did was a lie from start to finish. What they did was sinful. Again, they did not have to do any of what they did, because GOD would have seen to it that His will was done — especially when it related to the seed line of the Messiah. Many suppositions are given by various writers as to why Jacob may not have been officially condemned in this transaction. This writer has decided not to engage in any of these and simply allow this to be a mystery which only eternity may reveal. But it is indeed puzzling. Further, it will be observed in the Scriptures that there are other cases where sin is not rebuked (Lot offering his daughters for the men of the city to sexually abuse). It also seems evident that this fraud did not cause Jacob to have the blessing. GOD had already given him the blessing before this fraud was perpetrated.

One thing to be observed is that there were a number of consequences to Jacob's sinful actions this day.

> *"(1) He never saw his mother after that; (2) Esau wanted him dead; (3) Laban, his uncle, deceived him; (4) his family life was full of conflict; and (5) he was exiled for years from his family"* (McArthur, p. 52).

When considering McArthur's list, one should remind himself that there are always consequences for sin.

Deprived of his sense of sight, Isaac had to rely on other senses — touch and smell. But, these senses deceived him, and this is a lesson all should learn — the senses can deceive. Isaac wanted this to be Esau, so why did he not weigh these two senses with the third — hearing — and ask for an outside confirmation that this was indeed Esau? His sense of hearing said this was not Esau. This is another important lesson which should be learned. When in doubt, seek more information (proof) to confirm the reality of what is said or done. Even sight can deceive one (magicians).

> *"If Isaac had stuck to hearing and ignored his feelings, he would not have been deceived"* (Marshall Keeble, quoted by Coffman, p. 350).

Note a list of the direct lies Jacob told Isaac on this occasion: (1) "I am Esau thy firstborn;" (2) "I have done according as thou badest me;" (3) "eat my venison;" (4) "the LORD thy GOD brought it to me;" and (5) "I am" – v. 24. One might also note the indirect lies of Jacob: (1) his "hairy" arms, and (2) the clothes of Esau with their

smell.

Meals were very important at solemn occasions such as this one. This is seen in that when Jacob brought the food, he recognized that his father had to first eat, and then he could receive the blessing (v. 19). Finally the blessing is given. Physical blessings are given, as well as the fact that others, including his brother, will serve him (he will be strong and powerful). Finally, everyone who blesses or curses Jacob will receive in kind that which he bestowed upon him.

Gen. 27:30-40 "And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

"And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also made savory food, and brought it unto his father. And he said unto his father,

Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who then is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed. When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with guile, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly name Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two time. He took away my birthright. And, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants. And with grain and new wine have I sustained him. And what then shall I do for thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, of the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling, And of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother. And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt break loose, That thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck." (ASV)

No sooner had Isaac blessed Jacob and Jacob had left — Esau arrived with savory food. He knew his father had been waiting for him, so it must have come as a shock when his father (who could obviously smell the food) asked, "Who art thou?" Isaac was obviously shocked when the answer came — "I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau."

"trembled" — charadh — *"to quake, be afraid, tremble; to move around; to be startled; to be anxious; to come with trepidation; to frighten, terrify. The primary meaning is shaking. Trembling and fear are derived meanings"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to tremble, to quake, to be terrified"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 2729); *"Hebrew scholars tell us the original language is extremely graphic, something like 'Isaac trembled most excessively with a great trembling'"* (Morris, p. 438).

"very exceedingly" — charadhah — *"It means quaking, trembling; terror, fear, consternation; care, careful service"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning trembling, quaking, fear. This trembling is often brought on by acts of GOD"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 2729).

Why was Isaac shocked, i.e., in a virtual panic? When

the above definitions are considered, especially that for "very exceedingly," one discovers it was simply because he had given the "right son" the blessing. It would seem to this writer that the enormity of what he had tried to do contrary to GOD's will struck him. GOD had said the older would serve the younger, and Isaac had tried to negate GOD's will. Thus, he had placed himself in grave danger. GOD does not tolerate rebellion to His will.

> "An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him" (Proverbs 17:11).

Isaac had placed himself and his entire family in grave danger by his rebellion.

It should be noted how desperate Esau was for the blessing. But this blessing was tied to the birthright which he had so flippantly sold. Note again the passage in Hebrews 12:16-17.

> "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Emphasis mine, RK).

Note also the words of Esau in the present text.

> "he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing"

It is obvious that the blessing of the firstborn belonged to the one who had the birthright.

What was it that Esau desired? He had distanced himself from the spiritual, having little or no care for such things. When one examines the blessing received by Jacob, it is obvious that Esau was interested in the physical (the material) aspect of the blessing given to the one who held the birthright. But note that once the blessing, guided by GOD, was given, it could not be rescinded. To his credit, Isaac did not try to rescind it.

Esau begged for a material blessing, and he was given one. He would have a good measure of material blessings. Further, he was told that he would live by the sword and serve his brother. He was also told there would be a time when the yoke imposed by his brother would be broken, i.e., he would have a measure of independence (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10; 28:16-17). In all of this it should be remembered that this was talking about the descendants of these brothers.

Note also that the same "blame game" which had

taken place in the garden of Eden was taking place again. Man never changes, but like Adam and Eve, Esau had no one to blame but himself. He sold his birthright for a moment's pleasure and lost the most important thing he could have had.

There is also a lesson to be learned here about hasty decisions, especially those based on fulfilling some momentary pleasure. As in the case of Esau, those hasty decisions often come to haunt one later, and many times the consequences of such cannot be changed. Much hurt could often be avoided by taking a little time to look at possible future consequences of the action contemplated.

Gen. 27:41-45 "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?"

> "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then will I slay my brother Jacob. And the words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah. And she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. And arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran. And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away. Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him. Then I will send, and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" (ASV)

"And Esau hated Jacob" The word hated comes from the Hebrew satam.

> *"A verb meaning to hate; to bear a grudge against, to harass. It means to nurse hostility and bitterness toward someone; or even to attack or harass a person physically"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1127).

From the context, it is clear that his bitterness would

lead to physical violence and death for Jacob.

Why did he hate Jacob? "Because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him." It should be noted with emphasis that the blessing given to Jacob by Isaac did not originate with Isaac. GOD had determined before these brothers were born that Jacob would receive these blessings. Thus, Esau's hatred stemmed from the fact that Jacob was blessed by GOD, that Jacob was favored by GOD. Does this remind one of an earlier incident when Cain killed his brother Abel because of the favor he was shown by GOD?

Esau hatched this plot in "his heart," but it is clear that he also spoke of this plot to someone, because Rebekah heard about it. This reminds this writer of the saying that a secret is no longer a secret when another knows it. Esau is planning murder. From where does murder come?

> "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:18-19).

When did Esau plan for this murder to take place? After Isaac's death. This seems to be done from respect for his father. The text further indicates that Esau expected his father to die in a short time. Whatever was going on with Isaac seems to have been quite serious.

When Rebekah heard of Esau's plans, she acted quickly to spare Jacob's life. She commanded Jacob to go to her brother's house (Laban) until Esau's anger cooled down. After his anger cooled, she would call for him to return. Here again one sees that her faith in GOD is not what it should be. Just as GOD would have made Isaac bless Jacob without her help, so He would have protected Jacob from Esau. The Messiah would come through Jacob, who was not married at this time and had no children. There is also a sad note here. After Jacob left home, there is no indication Rebekah ever saw him again. What she thought would be a short time would end up being about twenty years, during which time she died. Further, there does not seem to be communication between them as to Esau's anger departing him, for when Jacob did come home, he was afraid of Esau's possible vengeance.

"why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?" There is a possible reference here to the avenger of blood (the goel). If Esau murdered Jacob under that system, then the nearest male kin would be obliged to

execute Esau. Since Jacob did not have any children, the nearest of kin would have been Isaac.

> "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made He man" (Genesis 9:5-6).

Since verse forty-six obviously belongs with the text of the next chapter, it will be discussed there.

Genesis 28

Gen. 27:46 – 28:4 "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And GOD Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which GOD gave unto Abraham."

> "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father. And take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And GOD Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a company of peoples. And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee. That thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings, which GOD gave unto Abraham." (ASV)

After Esau threatened to kill Jacob, Rebekah feared she would lose both of her sons – one to murder and the other to justice. Rebekah devised another plan to spare **both** of her sons. It is thus seen by this action that she had a love for both of her sons, though one was favored by her more than the other. Her plan involved separating Jacob and Esau.

"the daughters of Heth" the daughters of the land, which were the Hittites. Esau had married Hittite wives. Rebekah knew that the blood-line must be kept pure. Both she and Isaac had been disappointed in Esau's taking wives of the Hittites. She therefore convinced Isaac that Jacob needed to go to Padan-aram to their relatives in order to obtain a bride from them. It appears she did not have to do much convincing for Isaac to recognize the necessity of this action.

Regarding the purity of the lineage, two things were at play which should be considered. (1) The blood-line would be kept. (2) Most importantly, a spiritual lineage would be maintained. Intermarriages with the heathen who brought their idols with their marriage would weaken the faith. (Intermingling of religions through marriage often weakens one or both parties.) The true religion must be kept pure so that there would be a remnant available when the time was right for the Messiah's entrance into the world. Where would Jacob most likely find a mate to help him maintain the above-mentioned purity? Padan-aram — among his kinsmen.

> "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness" (2 Corinthians 6:14, emphasis mine, RK)?

It should be considered here that though it may be unwise to marry an unbeliever, marriage to an unbeliever is not forbidden. It is being **unequally yoked** with an unbeliever which is forbidden under the Christian dispensation. Do not marry someone whose spiritual strength (or lack of spirituality) is strong enough to pull one away from **the faith**. Unwise decisions are not necessarily sinful decisions.

Isaac called for Jacob

"blessed him" Isaac gave up his plans to give Esau the blessing. He wisely acquiesced to GOD's plan regarding the inheritance (see Genesis 25:19-23). He stated that GOD would bless Jacob by: (1) making him fruitful (he would have children); (2) multipling his seed, i.e., making him a "multitude of people" [*"a congregation, an assembly, a crowd, a multitude, an army, the Hebrew community, an assembly of nations"* (Zodhiates, CD)]; (3) Giving him "the blessing of Abraham." It is interesting to consider that when Isaac thought he was giving the blessing to Esau, it did not include the "blessing of Abraham," i.e., the blessing next considered (Messiah). (4) blessing Jacob's posterity with Abraham's blessing (a Messiah); (5) Inheriting the land promised to Abraham. This was the

land in which he was presently a stranger. This last gave him encouragement that he would return to this land at some point.

Isaac gave Jacob a "charge." Note that this was not a suggestion — it was a command. He commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite. (See notes above on this subject.) He was to marry one of his cousins. This would take Jacob on a journey of several hundred miles, encompassing at least a month's time. It should also be remembered that Jacob is believed by most scholars to be about seventy-five years old at this time.

Gen. 28:5 "And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother."

> "And Isaac sent away Jacob. And he went to Paddan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother." (ASV)

Bethuel, the brother of Abraham, is called a "Syrian" in the text. The word here is arammiy, which is *"A gentilic noun (with the ending iy) indicating a Syrian or Aramean. It referred to an area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 98). He is called this because he dwelt in the land commonly called Syria.

One of the important things this passage shows is Jacob's obedience to his father's charge. But it is also a sad passage when considered in the whole. Little did Jacob suspect that he would now be away from his family for an extended time. Further, when he said his good-byes he could never have envisioned that this would be the last time he would see his beloved mother. Oh what heartache sin so often produces.

This is also seen to be another incident where the results are given, and then details are filled in afterwards. Jacob obeyed and arrived at his destination. Now some of what happened before he arrived at Padan-aram will be revealed.

Gen. 28:6-9 "When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of

Nebajoth, to be his wife."

> "Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram, to take him a wife from thence. And that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Paddan-aram. And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father. And Esau went unto Ishmael, and took, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife." (ASV)

One of the things which should be emphasized here is the blessing just enumerated in verses one through five of this chapter. The first time Isaac blessed Jacob, he did not know he was blessing Jacob – he was deceived. In the present instance, he knew exactly who he was blessing. Further, he declared these blessings to a greater extent than he had previously done. In this writer's opinion, this shows that he had repented. He now placed himself fully under the will of GOD in this matter, whereas before he had tried to defy GOD's will. Esau had observed these events and now understood that there was no way he would receive the family blessings, either material or spiritual.

It appears in this text that Esau finally realized how bad a thing he had done in marrying daughters of Canaan. Yet, he still failed to comprehend fully. Note his motive for going to Ishmael's family for a wife. It was not done to please GOD, but rather to please Isaac.

> *"The expression 'pleased not' gives a milder touch to the Hebrew, which originally said: 'were evil (raoth) in the eyes of'"* (Leupold, Vol. 2, p. 769).

Again, he showed his lack of spirituality. His desire was not to please GOD but his father. While it is right to honor one's earthly father, he must put GOD before him.

> "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37).

Interestingly, both Isaac and Esau violated the principle of the above passage.

Though Esau finally realized the error he had made in marrying Canaanite women, instead of rectifying the situation — he compounded his error. He married a daughter of Ishmael, whom GOD had rejected for the lineage of Messianic blessing.

"Ironically the unchosen son of Isaac married into the unchosen line of Ishmael" (Cook, p. 74).

Esau probably thought it would please Isaac if he married within the family of a son of Abraham. His problem was that he did not look at this through spiritual eyes, for if he had, he would have known that this was a wrong choice. As Camp points out, Esau saw what Isaac did with regard to Jacob, but he did not see (Camp, Vol. 2, p. 37).

> "in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:14-15).

Esau's heart had "waxed gross" and therefore could not perceive or accept the spiritual character he should have assumed.

Gen. 28:10-17 "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven: and behold the angels of GOD ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD GOD of Abraham thy father, and the GOD of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of GOD, and this is the gate of Heaven."

> "And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set. And he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed. And

behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven. And behold, the angels of GOD ascending and descending on it. And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the GOD of Abraham thy father, and the GOD of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee, whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place. And I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of GOD, and this is the gate of Heaven" (ASV)

Here is the account of the famous "Jacob's ladder." Jacob journeyed approximately five hundred miles from his home to Haran (Morris, p. 446). Unlike today when this distance can be driven in a day, it would have taken Jacob many days to travel that far.

Jacob arrived at Bethel (*"the house of GOD"*) and prepared for a night of rest. It was close to this place that Abraham had built an altar to GOD.

"And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD...And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD" (Genesis 12:8; 13:3-4).

Jacob used stones for his pillow. Some have speculated that he may have used some of the very stones Abraham had used in building his altar to GOD.

Jacob had a dream of a ladder which reached from earth to Heaven. This writer cannot help but think about the tower of Babel here. Man can try to get to Heaven by his own efforts, but he will fail miserably. But when man obeys GOD, the way to Heaven is made available to him by GOD.

"ladder" — sullam — *"A masculine noun referring to a stairway, ladder. It refers to a series of steps constructed in order for a person to reach a location by going up or down it"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 781).

On the stairway, Jacob saw the angels of GOD

ascending and descending. What else did Jacob see? At the top of the ladder, he saw a theophany — the Lord appeared (GOD appearing in a form visible to man). And then GOD spoke to Jacob. Jacob journeyed alone — yet he was not alone.

> "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

GOD's message to Jacob was one of reassurance. Jacob was fleeing from the wrath of his brother. Would he ever see his homeland again? What did GOD say to Jacob? (1) The first thing He did was identify Himself as the GOD of Abraham and Isaac. (2) He promised to give the land where Jacob slept to him and his descendants. (3) He promised that Jacob's descendants would be very numerous and spread over the land. (4) The Messianic promise was renewed – all nations would be blessed through one of his descendants. (5) GOD said he would be with Jacob with the implication that he would protect him. (6) GOD promised him that he would come home some day. GOD confirmed the blessings given to Jacob by Isaac before he departed for Haran.

> *"Jacob is being strengthened in the faith and supported by liberal promises. Because he was penitent over his sin and stood greatly in need of the assurance of divine grace"* (Leupold, Vol. 2, p. 773).

Here one should contemplate that the word "angel" means *"messenger."* Angels are used by GOD as messengers. We do not know all that this entails. But looking at the Scriptures, it can be seen that they sometimes literally carried a message from GOD to human beings (Daniel 9:21). In Hebrews, they are proclaimed as "ministering spirits" for the "heirs of salvation." It is speculated by some that the angels going up and down the stairway represent man's prayers going up to GOD and His answers being delivered to man.

Note the following thoughts regarding the ladder by Coffman.

> *"The ladder is also a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ladder was 'the way' between earth and heaven; and Christ affirmed that he is indeed 'The Way' (John 14:6); and, as Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending upon that ladder, Jesus affirmed to Nathaniel that he would 'see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man' (John 1:51). The ladder is*

therefore a perfect representation of Christ in that in him God came down to men; and in him men themselves may go up to God and be in heaven with him for ever. Christ is the only avenue of communication between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5), just as this ladder in the dream was the only way to God's presence" (p. 362).

How did Jacob react to this dream? He was "afraid." The words "afraid" and "dreadful" are the same word in the Hebrew.

Yare — *"to be afraid; to fear, revere; to be feared; to be dreadful; to be reverenced; to terrify, make afraid. There are two main types of fear described by yaMreM': (a) the emotion and intellectual anticipation of harm, what one feels may go wrong for him; (b) a very positive feeling of awe or reverence for God, which may be expressed in piety or formal worship"* (Zodhiates, CD).

It would seem that the first time it appears in this text probably refers to the emotion or expectation of harm. The second occurrence probably refers to the time after the initial emotions passed with a proper recognition of what had transpired. With the proper understanding of these events and the spiritual nature of Jacob, fear would be replaced by awe and reverence.

Jacob next made two proclamations regarding this place: (1) this was "the house of GOD," and (2) this is "the gate of Heaven." Here was where GOD dwelt, and here was the way into Heaven.

Gen. 28:18-22 "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If GOD will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my GOD: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be GOD's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el. But the name of the city was Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If GOD will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I

> come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my GOD, then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be GOD's house. And of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." (ASV)

GOD had made a promise to Jacob to (1) give him the land, (2) give him numerous posterity, (3) make him a blessing to all of humanity, and (4) take care of him. It is not hard to see why some would then see Jacob's words in verses twenty and twenty-one as Jacob's trying to bargain with GOD. A bargainer would say, *"GOD, if you do this or that for me, then here is what I will do."* That is not what happened here. GOD made the promise to him to do these things for Jacob. Jacob responded to GOD's promises. Why would one put an evil connotation upon Jacob here when just the opposite could be true? (Maybe one should question his own heart before he questions Jacob's.) Young's Literal Translation gives the better sense of what was being said here.

> *"Jacob voweth a vow, saying, Seeing GOD is with me, and hath kept me in this way which I am going, and hath given to me bread to eat, and a garment to put on — when I have turned back in peace unto the house of my father, and Jehovah hath become my GOD, then this stone which I have made a standing pillar is a house of GOD, and all that Thou dost give to me — tithing I tithe to Thee."*

GOD had not placed conditions upon Jacob when he promised him the multitude of blessings. Jacob's promise of tithing to Him was done out of a heart of gratitude — not compulsion.

> "If" — im — *"A particle meaning when, if, whenever"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 66).

Jacob was saying that when he returned, that was what he would do. The service a Christian offers to GOD today should be for the same reason. Like GOD, Christians should give because of love. Further, there is no record of tithing being a command of GOD at this time. It would not be until the law of Moses when tithing would be commanded. It is this writer's view that Jacob was voluntarily offering this promised tithe — not bargaining with GOD. Giving should always be done out of gratitude by a grateful heart.

> "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for GOD loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

"The question to be faced today is whether or not we, who have been blessed so superabundantly above all the blessings received by Jacob, should be content to give less than he vowed to give" (Coffman, p. 364).

Jacob set up a pillar, using the stone he had used as a pillow/head rest.

"pillar" — matstsebah — *"Literally, it is something which is stationed, i.e., a column, a pillar, a memorial stone, a monument, a statue (usually of idols); a stump, a trunk"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning something set upright. The word most often refers to a standing, unhewn block of stone utilized for religious and memorial purposes"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 652).

He next anointed the pillar with oil. Oil was poured on things to dedicate them to sacred service or to dedicate a memorial. It is this writer's view that both are under consideration here. He dedicated this place as the "house of GOD" and memorialized the event which took place here. The pouring of the oil might also represent an offering to GOD, thus making it an altar as well. Note what GOD later said to Jacob.

"I am the GOD of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred" (Genesis 31:13).

GOD identified Himself to Jacob as the GOD who spoke to him at Bethel — where Jacob (1) anointed the pillar and (2) made his vow.

"And GOD said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto GOD, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto GOD, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of GOD was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz,

which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother" (Genesis 35:1-7).

"Stone pillars had various functions. (1) They served as visible symbols of God's presence with His people (28:18, 22; 31:13; 35:14). (2) At Mount Sinai, Moses set up twelve pillars to signify the unity of the twelve tribes of Israel under God and His covenant (Ex. 24:4). (3) Sometimes individuals used pillars to establish boundaries or to serve as a witness to a treaty between equal parties (31:45, 51, 52). (4) Pillars also served as monuments to mark the tombs of loved ones (35:20), and they were occasionally erected as memorials to individuals who were still living" (2 Sam. 18:18)" (Grasham, Vol. 2, p. 157).

Genesis Chapter 29

Gen. 29:1-6 "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep."

"Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the east. And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and, lo, three flocks of sheep lying there by it. For out of that well they watered the flocks. And the stone upon the well's mouth was great. And thither were all the flocks gathered. And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in its place. And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence are ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is it well with him? And they said, It is well. And, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep." (ASV)

After receiving GOD's blessing at Bethel, Jacob continued his journey (Heb. "lifted up his feet"). As he journeyed toward Haran, he arrived at a well of water where shepherds were waiting to water their sheep. Apparently the custom was for them to gather to water their sheep at the same time. Was this because the stone was too large to be moved from the mouth of the well by one or two, and a cooperative effort was required?

There are several possibilities as to why a stone might be placed on the well. More than likely it had something to do with protecting the water supply. Considering the arid conditions of that region, it may have kept the water from quickly evaporating. In an open well there was also the danger that an animal seeking water might fall in and pollute the water through its death and decay. Another explanation is that it may have been a private well. Morris speaks of wells sometimes having large stones on them with a small opening at the top where a smaller stone was placed and some kind of lock placed on it by a private owner (p. 456). The well spoken of here does not appear to be one with "living water" (from a spring), but rather stored up water.

It does not appear from the context that Jacob saw the city of Haran at this time, or, if he could see a city, he did not know it was Haran. He asked the shepherds where they were from. He also enquired about Laban (whom they knew), asking about his health. He not only learned that Laban was in good health ("well" – shalom – "peace"), but that this was the very well his daughter used to water the sheep for which she cared. Further, he learned that Rachel was on her way to the well.

Did Jacob just "happen" to go to Bethel, just "happen" to come to this well, just "happen" to be at the place where he would meet someone from Laban's family? GOD had promised in the previous chapter to take care of Jacob. It is this writer's studied conclusion that what is seen here is the providence of GOD working to protect the seed line and provide for Jacob the lessons he needed to learn.

Gen. 29:7-12 "And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep. And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob

saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father."

> "And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together. Water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and they roll the stone from the well's mouth. Then we water the sheep. While he was yet speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep. For she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father." (ASV)

This writer has been amazed at the speculations about this immediate text. Most writer assume that Jacob was trying to get rid of the shepherds so that he could be alone with Rachel. They forget that Jacob was a shepherd and obviously a good one, as Laban's flocks flourished under his care. A good shepherd would provide all the time possible to feed the flock. Was Jacob's admonition to them then based on what he saw as a waste of valuable sunlight?

The shepherds answered Jacob by stating that they were to wait until all the flocks had gathered before any were watered. At the least this was a mutual agreement in this matter.

The next things noticed in this text are the arrival of Rachel and the fact that she was a shepherdess. Verse nine is filled with speculation by many commentators. They say this was a case of *"love at first sight."* The truth is that there is no such thing as love at first sight. There may be desire at first sight based on attraction of some sort. Love is something which is learned — not something one falls into. The speculations go on that because of this "love," Jacob was able to impress Rachel by singlehandedly removing this enormous stone. No where in the text is there any indication that this was an enormous stone that required superhuman strength or combined effort to move. The text tells of an agreement that the stone could not be removed until all the flocks were gathered. It should be remembered

here that Laban had more than one daughter and there is no indication that GOD told Jacob at this time that Rachel was to be his wife.

Jacob proceeded to water the flock of Laban. When he finished, he kissed Rachel. The custom of that time was to greet a person, not with a handshake as primarily done in Western societies, but with a kiss. The kiss of greeting was on the cheek, a greeting which is still done by many in the Middle East today. There is no indication that it was a kiss of affection upon her lips as some speculate. This would have been just as objectionable then as it would be today, for a stranger to walk up to a woman and kiss her.

The text then states that after kissing Rachel, Jacob "lifted up his voice, and wept." Why did he do these things? Was it because of joy that he had arrived at this destination after a long and lonely journey? Was it out of thanksgiving to GOD for a safe journey and guidance to his destination? The text simply does not say.

Jacob next revealed his identity to Rachel – he was "her father's brother." The word for "brother" is ach, which refers to any male relation. It could be a brother, cousin, grandchild, or nephew, as in this text. So additional information is needed to see the exact relationship Jacob has with Laban. This was supplied by Jacob when he said he was Rebekah's son. A relative had come to visit, so Rachel ran to tell Laban the news.

Gen. 29:13-14 "And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month."

> "And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month." (ASV)

These verses show the reaction of Laban when Rachel gave him the news of a visit by a kinsman. He eagerly ran to him, embraced him, and kissed him. A further note is given that Jacob stayed with him a month. It is during this time that Jacob would naturally get to know the two sisters. It should be remembered that Jacob was there for the express purpose of not just fleeing from Esau, but finding a wife from his kinsmen.

The logical thing would have been for him to use this time to try to decide which of these girls would be his bride. As will be seen, at the end of the month he had made a decision. But one should ask, where was GOD in this decision? Unlike Abraham's servant who sought GOD's choice when seeking a wife for Isaac, one does not see Jacob so doing. Jacob's choice was based on outward appearance.

Gen. 29:15-20 "And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

> "And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? Tell me, what shall thy wages be? And Laban had two daughters. The name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were tender. But Rachel was beautiful and well favored. And Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man. Abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel. And they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." (ASV)

After abiding with Laban and his family for a month, Laban offered to pay Jacob for his labors. This month would have not only allowed Jacob to realize this was the woman he should marry, but it also gave Laban an opportunity to observe Jacob — his personality, morals, work habits, et cetera. It would also have been evident to him that there were sparks flying between Jacob and Rachel.

Information is also given to the reader that Laban had two daughters — Leah and Rachel. Leah is described as the older daughter and "tender eyed." There are a number of ideas about what this description means. McGee thinks it means she was not beautiful at all (p. 122). Morris believes it may mean *"that she did not have eyes as dark and lustrous as those of Rachel, or it might even refer figuratively to Leah as a woman of compassion"* (p. 460). MacArthur thinks it

means her eyes *"were a pale color rather than the dark and sparkling eyes most common. Such paleness was viewed as a blemish"* (p. 54). Poole thinks it means *"her eyes were soft and moist, and therefore unsightly"* (p. 67). Clarke thinks this means she had *"soft and beautiful eyes"* (p. 182). Cozort believes it means she was *"weak eyed, did not see well"* (p. 144). Rachel is described as "beautiful and well favoured." It would seem to this writer that what is being said in comparison is that, overall, Rachel was more beautiful than Leah. As Coffman states, *"Her appearance was more sensational than that of Leah"* (p. 372). Coffman also gives seven reasons why he believes Leah was the stronger and more suitable wife for Jacob. This writer would recommend his readers study Coffman's thoughts on both Leah and Rachel found on pages 370 and 371 of his commentary on Genesis.

Because of his love for Rachel, Jacob said he would serve Laban for seven years if he could have her as his wife. Grasham observes that this is about twice as long as the normal "bride price" of labor (p. 177). Thus, it was a very generous offer by Jacob. Laban accepted this agreement. Interestingly, his words may indicate that he was already planning on defrauding Jacob. Note that Laban used the word "her" in verse nineteen instead of the word "Rachel."

Verse twenty shows how deeply Jacob's love for Rachel was. He served the seven years, but the labor did not seem to be burdensome to him. Instead, the seven years seemed more like a few days. The time passed quickly. When one loves another, his labor is an act of love which seems to make its duration as if it is nothing. Love for GOD should cause one's labor in His service to seem as nothing but a time of joy and celebration. The burdens of time and life will seem as nothing to those who truly love GOD.

Gen. 29:21-30 "And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfil her week,

and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years."

> "And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him. And he went in unto her. And Laban gave Zilpah his handmaid unto his daughter Leah for a handmaid. And it came to pass in the morning that, behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It is not so done in our place, to give the younger before the first-born. Fulfil the week of this one, and we will give thee the other also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week. And he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her handmaid. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years." (ASV)

How joyful this day must have been to Jacob. He had served his seven years and reminded Laban of their contract. He said, "Give me my wife." This phrase is interesting to the Western mind, which does not speak of one's being his wife until she is pronounced so after a wedding ceremony. In those times, a woman was considered to be a man's wife from the time it was determined they were to be husband and wife. This can also be seen in the New Testament with regard to Mary and Joseph.

> "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20).

Note that the Holy Spirit declared that Mary was Joseph's wife. For couples such as Jacob/Rachel and Joseph/Mary, there were two privileges which were withheld from them. They did not live together nor have the physical union of married people. It may also be observed that there does not seem to be any kind of ceremony involved in their marriages. The bride was brought to her husband on the wedding night and the marriage was consummated.

Laban threw a feast to celebrate this event. It was common in those times to have a week's feast for the "bride and groom," during which time they were treated like royalty. In some places they were even called "King" and "Queen" during this week.

Laban brought Jacob his bride, but it was not the one he thought he was getting. Today one would ask, How he could have been so deceived? Society today has a veil which can easily be seen through, and ceremonies are held in well-lighted places. But then, as still in many parts of the Eastern world, the bride was brought heavily veiled, and she was brought to her husband at night. As a "wedding" gift, Laban gave Leah Zilpah as her personal slave. At any rate, when Jacob went in unto Leah, the marriage was consummated, and there was no turning back.

There are many curiosities about this whole affair which modern man would love to know. Did Leah join in this deceit willfully or simply in obedience to her father's command? Did Rachel have anything to do with the deceit, or did she need to be restrained forcefully from revealing her father's treachery? GOD simply relates the events to the reader which need to be revealed.

One can only imagine the confusion when the next morning revealed the treachery of Laban and then the anger which Jacob must have felt. It would seem that Jacob was now experiencing the emotions which his brother must have felt at his and Rebekah's deceit. When he confronted Laban over these events, he was told their customs prevented Rachel from being married before her older sister was married. Though these customs have existed in some countries, there was no indication that it was a custom in Haran. Further, if it were a custom there, Jacob should have been told about it when he originally made the arrangements for Rachel's hand. Consider all of the deceit in this family. Laban's sister used it, and Rachel will later be involved in it as well. Laban was indeed a mean man without much of a conscience, it would seem, regarding treating his fellow man as he would want to be treated.

Jacob had fulfilled his service for Rachel but had been given Leah. But it was still Rachel that he wanted, and Laban knew it. Laban proposed that Jacob could still have Rachel if (1) he fulfilled Leah's bride week, and (2) if he worked another seven years in his service. If Jacob wanted Rachel, what else could he do? After the week was up, he was then given Rachel. Laban also gave Rachel a personal servant whose name was Bilhah.

Verse thirty is interesting from the standpoint that the text says Jacob "loved also Rachel more than Leah." Contrary to the thoughts of some, this shows that there was a love he had for Leah. It simply was not as great as that which he had for Rachel. The same thing had existed in his family with Rebekah's loving him more than his brother Esau, and the opposite's being true with his father Isaac. In both cases, this caused trouble in these families. Parents today need to observe the events of Isaac and Jacob's families and be very careful not to show destructive favoritism toward their children. Nevertheless, this multiple marriage will kick off a contest between Leah and Rachel to provide children for Jacob.

In reading this account, there are two things around which obvious questions arise. (1) What about polygamy/bigamy? (2) What about incest? By recording that Jacob had two wives, was GOD condoning these actions, because He did not condemn this in the text itself? When one travels back to Genesis chapters one and two, he discovers that GOD created one man for one woman, not multiple wives (or husbands). Further, note that GOD defined marriage again by stating that a man leaves his father and mother and "cleaves to his wife" (not wives). If GOD approved of bigamy, then this would have been the perfect time to introduce another wife for Adam. It should also be observed that when Jesus was confronted with the question on divorce, he pointed back to the beginning of time to answer the question (Matthew 19). What GOD established then was the rule by which He expected man to abide in marriage relationships.

It should be remembered that GOD in His Holy Word recorded many things man did simply as a matter of record. This does not mean that he approved of every action that is recorded. He certainly did not approve of Satan's words ("Ye shall not surely die"). GOD certainly did not approve of the deceit recorded in the present context, but recorded it for the reader's learning.

> "The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit" (Proverbs 12:5).

Was Jacob guilty of incest as well as bigamy? Laws against incest were not given by GOD until Mosaic times (See Leviticus 18, 20, 21, where incest is defined by GOD.) In the very beginning, there had to be "incest" (as thought of today) for the human race to exist. Eve was the mother of all human beings

(Genesis 3:20), so where did Cain get his wife? Logic states that she was a sister or niece, or some other close female relative.

Gen. 29:31-35 "And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing."

> "And Jehovah saw that Leah was hated, and he opened her womb. But Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben. For she said, Because Jehovah hath looked upon my affliction. For now my husband will love me. And she conceived again, and bare a son: and said, Because Jehovah hath heard that I am hated, he hath therefore given me this son also. And she called his name Simeon. And she conceived again, and bare a son. And said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons. Therefore was his name called Levi. And she conceived again, and bare a son. And she said, This time will I praise Jehovah. Therefore she called his name Judah. And she left off bearing." (ASV)

It has been shown in verse thirty that Jacob loved both of these wives, but Rachel far more than Leah. Thus, the word "hated" in verse thirty-one should be tempered. The word "hated" here would be better understood as "loved less," as is inferred in Matthew 10:37.

> *"The word hated indicates less affection of less devotion; it does not indicate positive hatred"* (Yates as quoted by Coffman, p. 374).

Verse thirty-one shows that GOD is concerned about all people, and so should we be. Why did GOD open Leah's womb but close Rachel's? It would seem that He was causing Jacob to give her more attention, to show her more affection. Partiality is a dangerous thing, and one would think that Jacob should have understood this when viewing the position he now occupied in this foreign land. It is this writer's belief that GOD was showing Jacob that Leah was His choice.

Rachel was Jacob's favorite, and yet it would not be through her that Messiah would come. This has led this writer to consider that Jacob did not consult with GOD about which of these sisters he should marry when he first met them. It would then seem that Jacob chose Rachel based on her physical, outward appearance. It would be through Leah that the priestly tribe would come (Levi). Leah would bare the son through whom the Kings of Israel would come and the one through whom the Messiah would come (Judah). These were GOD's choices! Jacob would come to favor the children of Rachel, but GOD favored the children of Leah. GOD told Abraham that his generations would yield One Who would be a blessing to all nations (Messiah). In accordance with that, GOD chose the one through whom the Messiah would come — **He chose Leah**. GOD can use the evil plans of men (Laban) to accomplish His goals. Laban meant to defraud Jacob, but GOD used what he did to bless Jacob and mankind. One should also look ahead and note the conniving nature of Rachel and her stealing of her father's idols. Why would she steal them if not to worship them? Rachel was cut from the same cloth as Laban. The picture of Leah is much different.

In the present context, Leah bore four sons to Jacob. In order, these sons were named "Reuben," which seems to mean "a son" which every family desired in those times. (Interestingly, when people are asked today which sex they would like to have as their first baby, most of the time the answer is a son. In many countries where the population is poor, the child most often aborted by choice is the female.) Since a son was desired and she had delivered one, she thought that Jacob would now love her, perhaps as much as he loved Rachel. Leah's second son was named "Simeon," which means something like "hearing." This seems to be a memorial to her belief that GOD had heard her, perhaps in asking for another son. GOD indeed is a prayer-answering GOD. The third son was named "Levi," which carries the idea of "joined." She thought this would cause Jacob to be attached or cemented to her. The fourth son was named "Judah," which carries the idea of "praise." Leah, from every appearance, was a godly woman to whom it would be natural to praise GOD for the blessing of children in her life. She knew Who it was that gives children and praised Him for His kindness and blessings.

> "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm

127:3).

One of the things which can be seen in this passage is that GOD knows our attitudes toward others. No matter who the person is or what that person does, an attitude toward him must be exhibited which pleases GOD. It is obvious to this writer that GOD was not pleased with Jacob's attitude toward Leah. Thus, GOD caused Jacob to have a more kindly attitude toward her through the children which He brought them. It must be understood that GOD loves all people and desires for them to be saved. Therefore it behooves His children to treat them in such a way that the possibility of their souls' being saved can come about through His children's efforts.

After these four sons are born to Leah, the Bible says she "left bearing." Clarke says this literally means *"she stood still from bearing"* (Vol. 1, p. 184). From the context, it will be seen that she later had two more sons and a daughter. She simply stopped having children for a while.

At this point, let us look ahead and see the rest of the children born to Jacob and his wives and concubines.

Leah's Children First/primary wife	**Bilhah's Children** Leah's maid
Reuben Simeon Levi Judah Issachar Zebulon Dinah (daughter)	Dan Naphtali

Rachel's Children Second/sub wife	**Zilpah's Children** Rachel's maid
Joseph Benjamin	Gad Asher

Genesis Chapter Thirty

Gen. 30:1-8 "And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in GOD's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? And she said, Behold my maid

Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, GOD hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali."

> "And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and she said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in GOD's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? And she said, Behold, my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; that she may bear upon my knees, and I also may obtain children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, GOD hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. And Bilhah Rachel's handmaid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali." (ASV)

One of the things evident from the last chapter and the beginning of this one is that the problem of bearing children was not Jacob's. When Rachel realized the situation, the text says she "envied" Leah.

> "envied" — qana — *"the cognate Arabic root means to become very red. Therefore, because of the redness of one's face when experiencing emotion, this Hebrew verb means to be jealous"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A verb meaning to be jealous, to be envious, to be zealous. This is a verb derived from a noun, and, as such, occurs in the extensive and causative forms only. The point of the verb is to express a strong emotion in which the subject is desirous of some aspect or possession of the object"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 7064).

The Bible warns that the emotion of envy is powerful and destructive.

> "For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one" (Job 5:2).

> "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Proverbs 14:30).

"For he (Pilate) knew that for envy they had delivered Him (Jesus)" (Matthew 27:18).

"Envy is grieving at the good of another" (Henry, p. 52)

It seems obvious that Rachel's envy drove her to do something she may never have dreamed of doing otherwise — giving her husband another sub-wife for the purpose of having children. (Rachel was the second wife and therefore a sub-wife of Jacob, though she was treated as the main wife.) One might remind himself that this is the same thing Sarah had done with Abraham (Gen. 16).

Rachel told Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." This seems an odd statement to the Western mind. How could not having children be considered a cause of death?

"A childless woman in ancient Near Eastern culture was no better than a dead wife and became a severe embarrassment to her husband" (MacArthur, p. 55).

It is also interesting to note that what Rachel strove to avoid by bearing children (death) was the very thing which caused the end of her earthly life.

"And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin" (Genesis 35:16-18).

How did Jacob react to Rachel's words? He became angry. Rachel was blaming Jacob as if he were GOD. This was sinful on three counts. (1) The evidence showed it was a false charge, because Jacob had born children through Leah. (2) She attributed the power of GOD to Jacob. (3) She failed to take her petitions to GOD, the giver of life. The Arabic version of Jacob's reproof reads as follows.

"Am I above God? Can I give thee that which God denies thee" (Henry, p. 52).

Rachel seemed to have given up the idea of becoming a mother by natural means. Plan Two called for adoption, but by an unusual method in today's society. She would give her handmaid (Bilhah) to Jacob and then claim the child/children born to her as her own. This adoption would be accomplished through

a ceremony which she described as, "she shall bear upon my knees." There are two thoughts as to what this means. Some believe this refers to Bilhah's actually giving birth while sitting upon the knees of Rachel, using them as a birth-stool. The second idea is the placing of the child on her knees after birth as a recognition that she claims the child as her own. It appears that both methods were used at times in that part of the world for adoption.

Bilhah conceived twice, bearing Jacob two sons. The first was named Dan by Rachel which has the idea of meaning *"judging."* Grasham believes the name means *"vindicate"* or *"judge"* (p. 192). He went on to proclaim that *"Rachel did not think of the birth of this son as simply a blessing from God; she saw it as justice that was due her because she was a helpless victim of childlessness."* The second son was named Naphtali, which refers to *"wrestling."* The competition between Leah and Rachel is clearly seen here. She felt that she was in a contest to see who could bear Jacob sons. Somehow, in her mind, she felt that she had now bested her sister. It is a wonder how she could deceive herself in this way. If viewed simply as a competition, she was way behind Leah. Leah had personally given birth to four sons, while Rachel had two, and they were not her natural sons, but sons through adoption.

Gen. 30:9-13 "When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher."

> "When Leah saw that she had left off bearing, she took Zilpah her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to wife. And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, Fortunate! and she called his name Gad. And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I! for the daughters will call me happy: and she called his name Asher." (ASV)

Leah next got in on the action by providing Jacob another sub-wife, her maid Zilpah. The first son born to Zilpah was named Gad. The ASV translates this as "fortunate," which seems to indicate that she felt GOD was favoring her with this birth. The KJV translates her as saying "a troop cometh," which indicates a large number. Is she saying she has given Jacob many sons? Zilpah provided Jacob with another son, which was named Asher. This name indicates her happiness

or feeling that she was blessed. This is based on her proclamation that "women will call me blessed" ("happy" – ASV).

At this point in the text Jacob had eight sons.

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:3-5).

Gen. 30:14-21 "And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. And GOD hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, GOD hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, GOD hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah."

"And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken away my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes. And Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for I have surely hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. And GOD hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said, GOD hath given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. And Leah conceived again, and bare a sixth son to Jacob. And Leah said, GOD hath endowed me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah." (ASV)

Reuben went into the fields during harvest time (May/June) and found mandrakes. Most scholars believe Reuben was between the ages of four and seven at this time. What are mandrakes?

> *"The mandrake is a small orange-colored berrylike fruit, much esteemed in ancient times as an aphrodisiac and inducer of fertility. It has been called the "love-apple" and, in Western countries, the "May-apple." It has also been used as a narcotic and emetic, especially its large roots"* (Morris, p. 468).

The superstition regarding these mandrakes would make them highly sought after by women of that time. Rachel heard about Reuben's find and bargained for them with Leah. No doubt she wanted them because she believed they might help her become pregnant. But one cannot help but wonder if she also wanted them so that Leah could not use them for that purpose.

Note the antagonism which seems to exist in verse fifteen. Leah accused Rachel of taking her husband. It should be remembered in those times that the first woman one married was the wife, while all others he might marry were sub-wives. Rachel actually held the position of a sub-wife. (Remember, Jacob recognized his marriage to Leah through the bride week.) But it was Rachel who held the primary affection of Jacob, even though she was not the primary wife and had born no children to him. Next, Leah accused her of trying to take Reuben's mandrakes. Rachel answered Leah by saying she would trade the mandrakes for Jacob for one night. It seems obvious that Leah so desired Jacob's company that she willingly made the trade.

It will be noticed that GOD opened Leah's womb again in a moment. Consider this thought first. Why did GOD open her womb after telling us about the mandrakes? They had no magical benefit to Rachel at this time, as she seemingly supposed. Was GOD demonstrating the foolishness of believing this plant could produce fertility?

When Jacob came in from the field, Leah met him and told of the bargain she had made for him. Without the aid of the mandrakes, Leah became pregnant that night. Why? Because "GOD hearkened unto Leah." Leah had approached GOD with a request that her womb be opened to produce more children. GOD heard her and gave her her request. On the other hand, Rachel relied on a superstition and was let down.

Another son was born to Leah, and she named him Issachar, which means *"wages, a reward, pay"* (Baker/Carpenter). This is the same word used in

Genesis 15:1, where GOD rewarded Abraham for his faithfulness. The puzzling thing to this writer is Leah's attributing GOD's listening to her and granting her request because she gave her maid to Jacob. How could she believe that GOD approved Jacob's having a fourth wife? How could she believe GOD rewarded her for encouraging and giving Jacob a fourth wife?

Leah then had a sixth son through whom she said GOD was giving her a dowry — a gift. She named this son Zebulun — *"dwelling."* She named him this because she believed that Jacob would now dwell with her because of all these children. It seems apparent from this that Jacob spent most of his time with Rachel.

This chapter is primarily concerned with showing the birth of the sons who would become leaders of the tribes of Israel. So why would a daughter be named here? Generally, daughters were not named in genealogies, for the inheritance passed through the sons. Could it be that she is named here to set the stage for the horrible events of chapter thirty-four, where an entire city will be wiped out?

Gen. 30:22-24 "And GOD remembered Rachel, and GOD hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, GOD hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son."

> "And GOD remembered Rachel, and GOD hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son: and said, GOD hath taken away my reproach: and she called his name Joseph, saying, Jehovah add to me another son." (ASV)

To this writer's recollection, this is the first indication that Rachel has taken her problem to GOD. In the past, she had schemed to get a child. Can it be that it took her a while to grow spiritually enough to have this son? Was it Jacob's rebuke of her in verses one and two which led her to rely upon GOD for a child? Was it the failure of the mandrakes or all of her schemes which caused her finally to wait on the Lord?

The text says that GOD "remembered" Rachel. He had never forgotten Rachel in the sense that this word is commonly used. Zakhar has *"three basic sets of meanings to remember, recollect, reflect upon"* (Zodhiates, CD). GOD heard the petitions of Rachel in that He now answered them by granting them. GOD opened her womb, she conceived, and bore her first natural son. She named this son Joseph (*"he who adds"* – Clarke, p. 187; might consider the idea of "GOD

has added" here) in the belief that GOD was going to give her another son.

> *"His name was a prayer that she might bear yet another son"* (Smith, p. 192).
>
> Rachel said GOD had "taken away" her "reproach."
>
> The word "reproach" (Cherpah) means *"reproach, shame, the object of reproach; scorn, contempt"* (Zodhiates, CD); *"A feminine noun meaning reproach, scorn, taunt. The term can be used for a taunt hurled at an enemy"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 382).

Rachel rejoiced at the fact she could no longer be taunted or scorned because of her barrenness. GOD had taken away her reproach, not the mandrakes or any human scheme.

Gen. 30:25-36 "And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee. And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock: I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me. And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons. And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks."

"And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service wherewith I have served thee. And Laban said unto him, If now I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry: for I have divined that Jehovah hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle have fared with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it hath increased unto a multitude; and Jehovah hath blessed thee whithersoever I turned: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me aught: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed thy flock and keep it. I will pass through all thy flock to-day, removing from thence every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. So shall my righteousness answer for me hereafter, when thou shalt come concerning my hire that is before thee: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, that if found with me, shall be counted stolen. And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. And he removed that day the he-goats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons; and he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks." (ASV)

After serving Laban for fourteen years, Jacob saw the need to separate himself and his family so that he might provide for them. It was not and should not be up to someone else to provide for a man's family; it is his responsibility.

"if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

At this point, it seems that he had no flocks of his own and had been much like a tenant farmer. Staples had obviously been provided for him by Laban. After proposing his departure to Laban, Laban pleaded for him to remain and work for wages. He offered to give Jacob whatever he asked if he would continue to care for his flocks and herds. The reason Laban wanted Jacob to continue caring for his flocks was that he understood GOD had blessed him because of Jacob. His flocks had increased dramatically under Jacob's care. No doubt there would have also been a desire to keep his grandchildren and daughters nearby.

Something is very interesting here which shows how Jacob's faith had grown during this period of time. He

told Laban that he did not want him to give him anything. Instead he proposed that all of the animals which were less desirable because of their color and markings would be separated from Laban's flocks. These would be maintained away from the more desired animals, ensuring that there would not be cross-breeding between the two flocks. Then in the future, any animals born in the purer flocks which were not as desirable, because of their markings or other factors, would belong to Jacob. Laban agreed, believing that Jacob would not benefit greatly from this arrangement. What was Jacob thinking? Surely he recognized as an accomplished shepherd that under normal conditions, he would not be gaining very many animals with the stipulations he proposed. It was mentioned earlier that Jacob's faith had grown. How so? He was placing his faith and trust in GOD to provide for him and his family. As will be seen, GOD indeed blessed him abundantly.

Verses thirty-five and thirty-six show that Laban separated all of the ringstraked (streaked or striped), spotted, off-colored, and speckled animals from the flocks. He then took those animals and moved them three days' journey away from Jacob and the pure stock. In this way, Jacob could not breed them together so as to increase the number of "inferior" animals for his own flocks.

One of the lessons to be learned in this context is that men are blessed when those who are righteous are among them. Laban's flocks had grown from a small number to be quite large because of Jacob. GOD's servants will always give an honest day's work for an honest day's wages. In fact, they will generally give a little extra. GOD's people do not desire to give minimums to men or GOD. Further, GOD's servants will treat their employers' tools and other possessions as if they were their own. An employer will not suffer loss or damage because of neglect or slothfulness at the hands of GOD's servants. Note also that Jacob did not take the credit for Laban's increase. Instead, he attributed the blessings received as coming from GOD. Truly, one should always give GOD the credit for blessings. Everything in one's possession has only been lent to him by the Father for a very short life in this world.

Gen. 30:37-43 "And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering

troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle. And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses."

> "And Jacob took him rods of fresh poplar, and of the almond and of the plane-tree. And peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled over against the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs where the flocks came to drink; and they conceived when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstreaked and all the black in the flock of Laban: and he put his own droves apart, and put them not unto Laban's flock. And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger of the flock did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods; but when the flock were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly, and had large flocks, and maid-servants and men-servants, and camels and asses." (ASV)

> *"This device of Jacob was one of two things: (1) It was either a semi-pagan superstition, just like the mandrakes, or (2) it was an order from God himself delivered to Jacob as a test of his faith, nor can that possibility be discounted"* (Coffman, p. 377).

Considering the next chapter, this writer is of the strong opinion that GOD directed Jacob in the activities mentioned in the current context. It is interesting that GOD blessed Laban because of Jacob with great herds and flocks. Then GOD basically took what He had blessed Laban with and gave it to Jacob. One might say GOD blessed Laban in order to bless Jacob. And bless him He did — "increased exceedingly."

Genesis Chapter Thirty-one

Gen. 31:1-3 "And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee."

> "And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as beforetime. And Jehovah said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." (ASV)

When viewing the scene here, one can see that Jacob had been in the land of Laban for twenty years. During that time, he had married two wives and two concubines. He had eleven sons and probably one daughter. His "house" had grown to a great number with all the servants.

Three things happened: (1) The sons of Laban were making false charges against Jacob. They accused him of fraudulent possession of property (theft). (2) Jacob noted that Laban no longer viewed him as he previously had with favor. (3) Third, and most important, GOD told Jacob to go home.

A man may be able to retain a good conscience, but he is not guaranteed to have a good name.

Gen. 31:4-13 "And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the GOD of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but GOD suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked. Thus GOD hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled. And the angel of GOD spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the GOD of Bethel, where thou anointedst the

pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."

> "And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, and said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as beforetime; but the GOD of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but GOD suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the flock bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstreaked shall be thy wages; then bare all the flock ringstreaked. Thus GOD hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the flock conceive, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the he-goats which leaped upon the flock were ringstreaked, speckled, and grizzled. And the angel of GOD said unto me in the dream, Jacob: and I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the he-goats which leap upon the flock are ringstreaked, speckled, and grizzled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the GOD of Beth-el, where thou anointedst a pillar, where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy nativity." (ASV)

Jacob began preparation for leaving Laban by calling for a conference with Leah and Rachel. He stated what was probably obvious to them — their father had been turned against him by their brothers. What was behind this ill will? Material gain. Jacob was growing richer, while Laban was growing poorer. He further pointed out that Laban had cheated him time after time. But whatever Laban changed his wages to, that is what GOD blessed Jacob with. Leah and Rachel acknowledged that Laban had not treated Jacob fairly, nor had their father treated them fairly. The final argument for leaving was that GOD had told him to go home. GOD identified Himself as "the GOD of Bethel."

Gen. 31:14-16 "And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which GOD hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever GOD hath said unto thee, do."

> "And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not accounted by him as foreigners? for he hath sold us, and hath also quite devoured our money. For all the riches which GOD hath taken away from our father, that is ours and our children's: now then, whatsoever GOD

hath said unto thee, do." (ASV)

There are several things to consider here which are important factors. The proper arrangement and loyalty between family members should always be considered. A daughter should view loyalty to and love for a husband as a greater responsibility than that for her father. Especially should one consider if he has been treated fairly by relatives. Laban clearly took advantage of his daughters and of Jacob. He was interested in what he could gain from them, so much so that his daughters thought of themselves as having been sold to Jacob. At the same time, they did not resent Jacob for this arrangement, because they knew he loved them.

They further considered their father as thinking of them as if they were strangers. They were treated as if they were not related to their brothers or father. They were treated as nothing more than hired servants who, in essence, owed their father everything. There may also be the idea here that GOD's blessings had been slowly transferred to Jacob until there was nothing left to gain from Laban. Jacob now had the best of the flocks and herds.

The attitude expressed in verse sixteen is stellar. It should always be GOD's servant's goal to do what GOD desires. We should not be selfish and stingy or hard-hearted.

Gen. 31:17-21 "Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead."

"Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon the camels; and he carried away all his cattle, and all his substance which he had gathered, the cattle of his getting, which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to Isaac his father unto the land of Canaan. Now Laban was gone to shear his sheep: and Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the River, and set his face toward the mountain of Gilead." (ASV)

Nomadic people are capable of moving at a

moment's notice. Jacob quickly packed his family and headed for Canaan. As will be seen later, he was not sure as to how he would be received. He did not know if his father, mother or brother was alive. Yet, he could not remain with Laban, as hostilities were growing between them. He had to rely upon GOD's proclamation that now was the time.

Jacob took his journey at the time of sheep shearing. Laban would have been busy with his sheep so he would not have noticed the absence of Jacob, probably assuming that he was busy shearing his own sheep. At the same time he began his journey, Rachel took Laban's images (*"teraphim"* — ASV; *"idols"* — NKJV).

> *"These objects were worshiped as gods, consulted for oracles, and believed to be the custodians and promoters of human happiness"* (Whitelaw quoted by Coffman, p. 386).

This indicates that Laban's family was polytheist, as was most of the world at that time and today. Why did Rachel steal Laban's gods? It would seem that she probably worshiped them. It may be that she worshiped Jacob's GOD as well. It should be remembered that she had lived among the heathen gods for many years before Jacob arrived. It would take time for her to learn GOD's way. Another possibility is that she stole these gods out of spite for the way her father had treated her and her sister. He had treated them as a piece of property without regard to their feelings.

Why did Laban get upset with Jacob? Did he get upset because Jacob took the flocks? Was he upset because Jacob took his daughters and grandchildren? It is this writer's opinion that he was less upset over the daughters and grandchildren than he was the flocks and gods.

The river spoken of here is generally believed to be the Euphrates. Jacob crossed over the Euphrates and headed toward "the mountain of Gilead."

> *"These mountains lay eastward from the territories later possessed by Reuben and Gad, extending from Mt. Hermon to the mountains of Moab, and called in the New Testament, Trachonitis"* (Clarke, p. 191).

Gen. 31:22-32 "And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. And GOD came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either

good or bad. Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the GOD of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them."

> "And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and he overtook him in the mountain of Gilead. And GOD came to Laban the Syrian in a dream of the night, and said unto him, Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And Laban came up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountain: and Laban with his brethren encamped in the mountain of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives of the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp; and didst not suffer me to kiss my sons and my daughters? now hast thou done foolishly. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the GOD of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Lest thou shouldest take thy daughters from me by force. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, he shall not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them." (ASV)

It is believed that Jacob traveled approximately three hundred miles before Laban caught up to him. This is believed to have been accomplished in seven days.

This seems to be a rather large distance, especially when considering the large family which he presently had, as well as the large flocks, herds, et cetera.

It should be noted that Laban is pointed out as being a Syrian. This seems to be done to emphasize the distinct national difference between GOD's people and Laban's.

When Laban's forces caught up with Jacob, they waited until the next day to approach Jacob. This was necessary, because GOD had a message for Laban which he was not going to like. GOD told Laban that he was to do nothing good or bad to Jacob. Laban was being warned that Jacob and his possessions were under GOD's protection. It might also be pointed out that Laban needed to be warned against harming Jacob, because he intended to harm him.

Laban began by asking why Jacob had sneaked away and accused Jacob of taking his daughters as if they were prisoners of war. Jacob admitted that he stole way because he was afraid Laban would have forced him to give up his family. Laban did not get it — his daughters were more than willing to go with Jacob. Remember that they looked at Laban as the transgressor. He next acted as if he were offended by not being allowed to throw a farewell party for Jacob and his family. Laban then softened his tone by acknowledging that Jacob truly wanted to be reunited with his family. Then he brazenly asked why Jacob stole his gods.

Jacob knew he had not stolen Laban's gods, nor did he have any interest in these gods. It also seems that he had enough confidence in his people to believe that none of them were interested in them either. So he made a bold statement — if these gods were found with any of the people, they would die. It is clearly stated that Jacob did not know that his beloved Rachel had stolen them.

Gen. 31:33-35 "And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images."

"And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two maid-servants; but he found

them not. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the teraphim, and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat upon them. And Laban felt about all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise up before thee; for the manner of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the teraphim." (ASV)

When Jacob offered Laban the opportunity to search his stuff for the stolen property, Laban quickly accepted. It would seem probable that he would have searched all of the property of those who belonged to Jacob, not just the immediate family. Note that Jacob's tent was searched and then the wives' tents. It seems that in those times, each principal member of the family had his/her own tent. Four wives equals five tents. The children would have lived in their mother's tent.

The last tent to be searched was Rachel's tent. It was previously revealed that Rachel had stolen the gods of Laban. Here it is revealed that she had taken them into her tent, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. She begged Laban's forgiveness for not rising, with the excuse that she was suffering the "custom of women" (menstruating). In many cultures, such a woman was considered unclean, and anything she touched was unclean. Under the Mosaic law (Leviticus 15:19), such was the case. Consider what this says about Laban's gods.

> *"To Laban, this meant that it would have been unthinkable that Rachel in such a condition would have come near his sacred images, much less sit on them. Thus we have a double reflection on Laban's 'gods,' being both* ***stolen*** *and* ***defiled*** *by contact with Rachel"* (Coffman, p. 389).

Gen. 31:36-42 "And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee

fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the GOD of my father, the GOD of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. GOD hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

> "And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast felt about all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us two. These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flocks have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from mine eyes. These twenty years have I been in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy flock: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the GOD of my father, the GOD of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now hadst thou sent me away empty. GOD hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." (ASV)

Jacob had had enough; he had taken all he was going to take. His integrity had been challenged by the fraud of Laban again and again. He demanded that Laban put the evidence before both of their peoples. He was basically saying, *"Put the accusation(s) on the table — do not be hinting or making veiled charges against me. Lay the things you found in my possession before everyone that you claim to belong to you as a witness against me."* Imagine the shame which Jacob's words brought to Laban when not one thing could be brought in witness against him. (By the way, this does not excuse Rachel's sins, but deals with Jacob's lack of theft or knowledge of theft.) Laban had been exposed as a false accuser before everyone, and no one could deny the fact.

> "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16).

> "Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Deuteronomy 23:1).

> "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of GOD; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:2-5; emphasis mine, RK).

Jacob then launched into a list of some of the things he had endured in his service to Laban. (1) The ewes and goats did not cast (miscarry) their lambs. This would have required exceptional care. (2) He had refrained from eating the rams of Laban's flock, even though these would have been considered part of his right. (3) Instead of bringing an animal killed by a beast to Laban, which was again his right, he simply replaced it with one of his own. (4) He was constantly subjected to the extremes of weather, suffering drought during the day and cold in the night. In those climates, it is not unusual to suffer differences of over fifty degrees in a twenty-four hour time span. (5) His constant care of the flocks was such that he had often been deprived of sleep. (6) He served twenty years in Laban's house. Seven years for Leah and seven years for Rachel. He had served six years for Laban's cattle, i.e., those which GOD had given him which had belonged to Laban.

Jacob ended this list by flatly saying that Laban would have sent him away with nothing if GOD had not intervened. He rightly attributed his growth to the GOD of Abraham. This should sound as a warning to people that GOD pays attention to how His people are treated by the world around them and how his people treat those around them. He paid attention to Laban's mishandling of Jacob, but He also paid attention to the way Jacob dealt with him. Because one is mistreated by others does not give him the right to treat others in a sinful way. Some would probably declare that Jacob had mistreated Laban — but how so? By using the striped limbs to cause the animals to bare striped and speckled offspring? GOD had let it be known that He was the One Who had caused these animals to bare the striped and speckled animals (31:11-13). The sticks were a test of faith — "Jacob, you put the sticks down, and here is what will happen."

Let us notice something else regarding the way the word "GOD" is used in verse forty-two. But first one needs to look at the word "father." The word "father" is often used to designate a male relative in the Old Testament. So when Jacob used the words "GOD of my father" one needs to examine the relationship carefully. To whom was Jacob referring here? He was

referring to his ancestors who were no longer alive on this earth. Notice that in the ASV, NKJV and YLT, the word "Fear" is capitalized.

> *"**Fear** is one of God's names amongst the rabbins. He calls him not **Isaac's** God, but his **fear**, because Isaac was yet alive, and in the state of probation, and served God with fear and trembling...The Jews observe, that God is not called the God of any particular person, as of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, till after their death"* (Poole, p. 73).

On the other hand, authors such as Coffman seem to believe that this term is simply used as another name for Jehovah, without a distinction of the individual spoken of as being either dead or alive (p. 390).

Gen. 31:43-44 "And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born? Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee."

> "And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children whom they have borne? And now come, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee." (ASV)

Grasham states that Laban's reply to Jacob was "pompous and false" (p. 229). How could Laban possibly claim that all of these things belonged to him with a straight face? He had done everything he could to keep Jacob from gaining any possessions. Yet, through hard work Jacob had prospered, and here Laban was claiming all of what had been earned by another did not belong to him but rather to Laban. Anyone except a fool can see through the nonsense of such an argument.

Laban knew that he was in the wrong, though he would not admit it. He did the only thing he could to try to save face — he offered to make a covenant with Jacob. In this case, it will be seen that he offered to make a treaty with Jacob — particularly a non-aggression pact.

Gen. 31:45-55 "And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather

stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, GOD is witness betwixt me and thee. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. The GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Nahor, the GOD of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

> "And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made a heap: and they did eat there by the heap. And Laban called it Jegar-saha-dutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, This heap is witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed: and Mizpah, for he said, Jehovah watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, and if thou shalt take wives besides my daughters, no man is with us; see, GOD is witness betwixt me and thee. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold the pillar, which I have set betwixt me and thee. This heap be witness, and the pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. The GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Nahor, the GOD of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the Fear of his father Isaac. And Jacob offered a sacrifice in the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mountain. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed and returned unto his place." (ASV)

Jacob set up a stone pillar and then instructed his brethren to pile up a heap of stones around it. More will be said about this later. Note where they ate — "upon the heap." Laban called this pillar and heap "Jegar-sahadutha" and Jacob called it "Galeed."

"Jegar-sahadutha" — "*The heap of testimony*" (Morris, p. 489).

"Galeed" — "The heap of witness" (Morris, p. 489).

Laban also gave it the name "Mizpah," the reason for which will be seen later.

Mizpah — "watchtower" (Morris, p. 490).

As is seen in this passage, Laban wanted GOD to be the one who watched between himself and Jacob.

> *"The Lord is the most gracious watchtower or observatory for all who will rely on him. As a watchman on the top of an observatory can see the enemies and dangers unseen to the ones below and thus can warn of the same, thus the Lord, from his eminence of infinity can see and will warn us of dangers we cannot see if we will listen to his instructions"* (Zerr, p. 76).

Regarding the meaning of this pillar to each of the participants, Coffman believes it meant a victory to Jacob and a face-saving device to Laban (p. 392).

Laban used the heap (Mizpah) as a witness or binding agent to get Jacob to agree to certain conditions. (1) "You will not afflict my daughters." He seems to imply that Jacob will possibly mistreat his daughters once he is gone from Laban's presence. Jacob had never shown anything but kindness to his wives and children. (2) "You will not take more wives than my daughters." It should be remembered that Jacob only wanted one wife to begin with. It was Laban who tricked him into multiple wives.

The next thing noticed about Laban is his claim that he raised up the pillar that Jacob raised. He was less than truthful. He wanted this pillar to be a witness that he would never cross this boundary to bring harm to Jacob, and neither would Jacob cross it to do harm to him. Because he would have done harm to Jacob if GOD had not restrained him, he seemed to think Jacob would do him harm if he got the opportunity.

Laban then called upon the GOD of Abraham and the god of Nahor to be a witness to this transaction. The reader will note that this writer capitalized the word GOD when it referred to Abraham but not when it referred to Nahor. He does this because Abraham is the one designated in the Scriptures as the one called by GOD to be the Father of His people. Abraham thus served the one true GOD. It does not seem the case that Nahor served the GOD of Abraham, and in fact may have been the originator of the images which Laban had and Rachel stole. Laban may have been endorsing the idea that, *"You have your GOD and I have mine, and they are equal to each other."* But Jacob swore (confirmed with an oath) by "the fear of his

father Isaac" (*"the object of fear or reverence"* – Leopold, p. 858). It should also be considered that since Abraham was Jacob's grandfather and Nahor was Laban's grandfather, that he was simply stating that GOD was common to both.

Next the sacrifice was offered, and the food was eaten. Then they tarried all night on the mountain. Many commentators say the two groups went to their separate camps for the night. But the text says they "tarried all night in **the** mount." Verse twenty-five indicates they camped in two distinct places. The following morning, Laban and his company said their good-byes and went back to their dwelling place.

Genesis Chapter Thirty-two

Gen. 32:1-2 "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of GOD met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is GOD's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."

> "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of GOD met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, This is GOD's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" (ASV)

"angels" — malakh — *"this is from an unused root meaning to dispatch someone as a deputy, a messenger, a herald. When God is doing the sending, it may be an angel, a prophet, a priest, or a teacher. The general sense is an ambassador representing someone who sent him. Such a person carried a message, or performed some other specific commission, or represented the sender in official negotiations"* (Zodhiates, CD).

When Jacob saw the angels, he knew that GOD was with him and would protect him. This was a host or army of angels, much like the one revealed to Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6:16-17. Twenty years before this time, GOD's angels had appeared to Jacob at Bethel. Now when he was ready to re-enter the land of promise, he was met again by GOD's angels.

> *"Jacob's two great enemies and opponents were Laban and Esau — one outside the promised land, one within"* (Morris, p. 493).

Morris misses the fact that Edom was outside of the promised land, yet, his point is well taken.

As will be seen in the text which follows, Jacob will still manifest some fear of what might happen when Esau arrives at his camp.

The name "Mahanaim" means *"two hosts or camps."* This may refer to GOD's angels as one camp and Jacob's people as the other. Or, it may refer to Jacob's host and Esau's host. Though east of the Jordan River, the actual sight of this place has not been confirmed as yet.

Gen. 32:3-12 "And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. And Jacob said, O GOD of my father Abraham, and GOD of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

"And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the field of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye say unto my lord Esau: Thus saith thy servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now: and I have oxen, and asses, and flocks, and men-servants, and maid-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in thy sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and moreover he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and was distressed: and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two companies; and he said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the company which is left shall escape. And Jacob said, O GOD of my father Abraham, and GOD of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good: I am not worthy of the least of all

> the lovingkindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children. And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." (ASV)

Jacob sent messengers to let Esau know that he was coming home. He knew exactly where to send them — the land of Seir (country of Edom). His message to Esau was interesting in that, though he was the heir of promise, he called Esau lord. (Adhon — *"proprietor, master, lord"*). It seems clear that Jacob was trying to be diplomatic and appease his brother. It should be remembered at this point that he had no way of knowing what Esau intended to do — Would it be war or peace? It should be remembered that Isaac had said Esau would serve Jacob, which was the opposite of what Jacob proposed to Esau in this text.

The second thing to notice is that he stated where he had been all this time. He had been with Laban, a descendant of Nahor from the family of Terah.

Third, he let Esau know that he was returning with a great household. He would not have to depend on his father or brother to maintain himself or his family.

Fourth, Jacob asked that Esau might show him grace.

> "grace" — chen — *"favor, kindness, grace, loveliness, charm, preciousness"* (Zodhiates, CD).

In verse six, Jacob's messengers returned to him, and the news they brought did not appear to be good. There did not appear to be any return message from Esau. Further, Jacob was informed that Esau was on his way with four hundred men. It should be considered that Esau did not know why Jacob was coming back. Did he intend to conquer Esau with the host he had raised while with Laban?

Verse seven says that Jacob was "afraid and distressed." He apparently assumed that Esau was coming with an army to extract his vengeance upon Jacob for taking his birthright and the promises usually given to the first born. Consider — why would not Jacob have this fear? In Genesis 27:44-45, Rebekah told Jacob to go to her brother's house and stay there until his brother's wrath was abated. She promised that when Esau cooled down, she would send for him to come home. But Jacob never received a message from her that it was safe to come. He did not know his

mother had died, apparently before Esau cooled off.

What did Jacob do? He acted in a prudent manner considering the information he had. Yet, he acted without faith. GOD had sent him word in Laban's house that it was time to come home. He had sent His angels to encourage Jacob. GOD was not sending Jacob to the slaughter. Jacob divided his company into two camps and separated them from one another so that if Esau attacked one of them, possibly the other could escape. Again, where was Jacob's faith?

After he made these preparations, he turned to GOD with a very short and simple prayer. The prayer contains the following elements according to Clarke.

> *"1. Deep self-abasement. 2. Magnification of God's mercy. 3. Deprecation of the evil to which he was exposed. 4. Pleading the promises that God had made to him. and, 5.Taking courage from what God had already wrought"* (p. 201).

In this prayer, Jacob reminded GOD of what He had said to him. There are some over the years who have stated that it is wrong to quote Scripture in prayer. Pray tell, what was Jacob doing if not quoting GOD's word? Further, he showed humility in declaring that he was not worthy of any of GOD's mercies which had been shown him. This is a point which should be emphasized. GOD's servants are **NEVER** worthy of the smallest thing GOD does for them.

> "Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed" (Psalm 6:2).

> "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O LORD" (Psalm 25:7).

> "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy" (Psalm 33:18).

> "Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Psalm 62:12).

> "Shew us Thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us Thy salvation" (Psalm 85:7).

Gen. 32:13-21 "And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; Two hundred she goats, and twenty

he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company."

> "And he lodged there that night, and took of that which he had with him a present for Esau his brother: two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? then thou shalt say They are thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, he also is behind us. And he commanded also the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him; and ye shall say, Moreover, behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me. So the present passed over before him: and he himself lodged that night in the company." (ASV)

The first thing noticed here is the number of animals which Jacob sent to Esau. The total number is five hundred eighty. The number is five hundred eighty because there were thirty "milch (milk) camels with their colts." It should also be considered that the camels were a very rich gift since they provided milk all year until they were close to giving birth. This milk is a very important part of the Bedouin diet.

There are a number of things to consider with regard to Jacob sending this "present" to Esau.

"present" — minchah — "The word means present, gift; tribute; sacrifice (mostly an unbloody one), a meat offering, an offering (in general), an oblation, a sacrifice" (Zodhiates, CD).

From the text, it appears that Jacob sent this present to appease his brother, to gain his favor and forgiveness. But there was also a custom being observed. It was customary to give a gift to the one visited, especially is this true of one who was considered superior.

In verse twenty the "present" was meant to "appease" Esau.

appease" — kaphar — *"the primary meaning of this root word is to cover. In time it came to mean to expiate, make an atonement, make reconciliation, placate; to cancel. It conveys the sense of appeasing, cleansing, disannulling, forgiving, pacifying, being merciful, purging, and putting off"* (Zodhiates, CD).

This re-enforces the idea that this gift was more than a simple tribute paid to a higher-ranking person. Jacob instructed each group of servants to tell Esau that he was coming behind them. As Esau saw flock after flock, Jacob hoped that this would appease his brother's anger.

Something else which needs to be repeated here is that Jacob called himself Esau's servant. Again, one is reminded that Isaac said Esau would serve Jacob, and not the other way around. This language was meant to mollify Esau.

Gen. 32:22-23 "And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had."

"And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had." (ASV)

Jabbok — *"a pouring out, or a wrestling, one of the streams on the east of Jordan, into which it falls about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, or about 45 miles below the Sea of Galilee. It rises on the eastern side of the mountains of Gilead, and runs a course of about 65 miles in a wild and deep ravine. It was the boundary between the territory of the Ammonites and that of Og, king of Bashan (Josh. 12:1-5; Num. 21:24); also between the tribe of Reuben*

and the half tribe of Manasseh (Num. 21:24; Deut. 3:16). In its course westward across the plains it passes more than once underground. 'The scenery along its banks is probably the most picturesque in Palestine; and the ruins of town and village and fortress which stud the surrounding mountain-side render the country as interesting as it is beautiful.' This river is now called the Zerka, or blue river" (Easton's Dictionary, CD).

Some writers call this a river, but it is more properly called a wadi. Water does not flow constantly as it would in a river. It is generally dry except after a rain, and then it immediately flows.

Gen. 32:24-32 "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with GOD and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen GOD face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank."

> "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with GOD and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, said he, I have seen GOD face to face, and my life is preserved. And the sun rose upon him as he passed over Penuel, and he limped upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip." (ASV)

After his family had passed over the river, Jacob was left behind. He was alone and turned in prayer to GOD.

> *"Every man holds that this text is one of the most obscure in the Old Testament"* (Luther, quoted by Leupold, Vol. 2, p. 875).

> *"There is no commentator who can so expound this experience as to clear up perfectly every difficulty involved. This much, however, is relatively clear: Jacob was praying; the terms used to describe the prayer make us aware of the fact that the prayer described involved a struggle of the entire man, body and soul; the struggle was not imaginary; Jacob must have sensed from the outset that his opponent was none other than God; this conviction became fully established before his opponent finally departed"* (Leupold, p. 875).

> *"'Who was this mysterious man?' It is not until 32:28 that the text identifies him as 'God.' Centuries later, Hosea recognized him as both 'God' and an 'angel' (Hosea 12:3-4)"* (Grasham, p. 248).

The question posed by the angel/man in verse twenty-nine reminds this writer of another instance in which a man should have known Whom he saw and to Whom he spoke.

> "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father" (John 14:9)?

There seems to be little doubt that Jacob had been wrestling with the second member of the GODHEAD in human form. Only by viewing a theophany could Jacob see GOD and live.

Genesis 33

Gen. 33:1-2 "And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost."

> "And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto

the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost." (ASV)

As Jacob approached his homeland, he looked up and saw Esau coming to meet him. He quickly observed that Esau had brought four hundred men with him. Were these a small army intent on destroying Jacob? Were they an escort which showed the might and position of Esau? Most attribute Esau with bringing these men with the intent of destroying Jacob. But when one looks at the text, he sees no hostility on the part of Esau. Every indication of the text is that Esau had long ago dismissed the idea of killing his brother. Having these men with him may simply have been a display of his success.

Jacob took no chances, dividing his family according to the mothers and placing them in order to face Esau. Esau would first encounter the handmaids (Bilhah and Zilpah) with their children (Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher). The second group Esau would encounter would be Jacob's first wife (Leah) with her children (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah). Last, but certainly not least, Jacob's favorite wife (Rachel) would be presented with her son (Joseph). The question most asked here is why were they arranged in this order? Was this a defensive measure is that if Esau and his men attacked, then Rachel and Joseph would have had the best chance to escape? Or, as this writer believes, were they placed this way to present them to Esau – the least to the greatest in Jacob's view?

Gen. 33:3-7 "And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which GOD hath graciously given thy servant. Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves."

"And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are these with thee? And he said, The children whom GOD hath graciously given thy servant.

> Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also and her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves." (ASV)

Jacob "bowed himself to the ground seven times" as he approached his brother.

> *"The manner of doing this is by looking toward a superior and bowing with the upper part of the body brought parallel to the ground, then advancing a few steps and bowing again, and repeating this obeisance till, at the seventh time, the supplicant stands in the immediate presence of his superior"* (Jameson, Fausset, and Brown).

It should be remembered that Jacob is actually the superior one here. So why was he bowing to his brother? The only answer this writer has is that he was honoring his brother as the elder of the two. He was showing Esau respect and courtesy. This writer does not believe he did this out of fear and guilt for the past.

For his part, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

> *"He had buried all his resentment, and forgotten all his injuries; and receives his brother with the strongest demonstrations, not only of forgiveness, but of fraternal affection"* (Clarke).

Esau did not approach Jacob with caution but ran to him, obviously eager and grateful to see his brother again after all these years had passed. The oriental mode of intense greeting is displayed here. They hugged each other and kissed (done on the cheeks, first one and then the other). It should also be noted that they wept together. These were obviously tears of joy. *"The two wept tears of forgiveness and reconciliation"* (Grasham).

When Jacob was asked who the people were behind him, he replied by acknowledging that GOD had graciously given him these children. Introductions were then made from the lowest to highest in rank according to Jacob's estimation. Each group came forward in turn, bowing before Esau. Two things are of interest here to this writer: (1) Joseph is the only child named, and (2) Joseph preceded his mother, whereas each of the other mothers preceded their children. Both of these seem to imply the favoritism already shown to Joseph by his parents.

Gen. 33:8-11 "And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have

enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of GOD, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because GOD hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it."

> "And he said, What meanest thou by all this company which I met? And he said, To find favor in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; let that which thou hast be thine. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found favor in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; forasmuch as I have seen thy face, as one seeth the face of GOD, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought to thee; because GOD hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it." (ASV)

Jacob had previously sent a large present before him of five hundred and fifty animals for Esau. Having now met Jacob face to face, Esau inquired about this rather large gift. Jacob simply told him the gift was for the purpose of finding grace (favor) from his brother. Esau initially refused the gifts, insisting that he had "enough," implying that he did not need any more possessions.

"I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of GOD" This phrase at first glance is puzzling. Was Jacob attributing Esau's face to being like that of GOD Himself?

> *"In this moment, Jacob remembered that, at Peniel, he had seen GOD's face in the wrestler and his life had graciously been spared (32:30). As he now looked upon the dreaded face of Esau, instead of wrath and enmity, he again saw grace and forgiveness"* (Grasham).

In noting verse eleven, Jacob said he had been abundantly blessed by GOD. In turn, Jacob said he was "blessing" Esau with some of his bounty.

> "blessing" — (berakah) —*"1. Blessing, 2. (Source of) blessing, 3. Blessing, prosperity, 4. Blessing, praise of God, 5. A gift, and 6. Treaty of peace"* (BDB

Considering the events of the context, all of these meanings could be in play here.

There is another thing which should probably be considered here – the word "enough." "Esau said, I have enough" in verse nine; and Jacob said, "I have enough" in verse eleven. In the original, these two

words are not the same.

> The word in verse nine is rab, which Strong says is *"abundant"* and Brown/Driver/Briggs say is *"much, many, great."* In verse eleven, the word "enough" is kol kol, *"properly the whole"* (Strong) and *"all, the whole...totality, everything"* (BDB).

This indicates a difference in the way the brothers viewed their possessions. GOD had truly blessed both Esau and Jacob. The difference in attitude may be that *"Jacob knew that, in the Lord, he had an inexhaustible resource"* (Morris). Jacob had it all materially and spiritually. Esau, being a profane person had the material (Hebrews 12:16).

Note that Jacob "urged" [patsar — *"to press, push"* (BDB)] Esau to accept his gift. Why did Jacob put so much pressure on Esau to accept this gift? Perhaps the answer is found in the words of Jameson, Fausset, and Brown.

> *"In the East the acceptance of a present by a superior is a proof of friendship, and by an enemy, of reconciliation."*
>
> *"In the Orient till this day, the receiving of a gift is understood as a pledge of friendship"* (Coffman).

It might also be pointed out that the refusal of a gift is an insult which could lead to hostility in action or thought, or a feud for generations to come. One might also consider the words of Grasham here.

> *"As he had told the angel, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me' (32:26), he was saying to Esau, 'I will not let you go unless you accept my gift.' Esau's acceptance of the gift without offering something in exchange indicated his view of Jacob's gift as a payment for the wrongs he had done to him."*

Gen. 33:12-17 "And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord. So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle:

therefore the name of the place is called Succoth."

> "And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and that the flocks and herds with me have their young: and if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on gently, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come unto my lord unto Seir. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find favor in the sight of my lord. So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him a house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth." (ASV)

There is no answer as to how long their first meeting lasted. Did they bring each other up to date on the events of the twenty plus years that had passed? Or was their visit very brief and to the point? No definitive answer can be given to these questions, but if this writer were to speculate, he would think they may have visited for a few days.

At some point, Esau indicated that it was time to move and offered to be an escort. Jacob declined his offer, stating that the children were of young age and that the herds would be damaged if they were pushed too hard. No doubt Esau's men would have desired to move more quickly, and this would have put a strain on Jacob's family and animals. Was there another reason why Jacob did not want to travel with his brother? Could it be that Jacob understood the difference between himself and his brother, and that difference might cause conflict just when peace had been made between them? One should remember that Esau is described as being a profane person (Hebrews 12:16). His people would no doubt have been of similar nature. Jacob and his people, on the other hand, were very conscious of spiritual matters. They needed to be kept primarily separate from one another in order to help maintain Jacob's people's spirituality. Further, Jacob did not need the protection of Esau to reach his homeland.

> *"behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD GOD of Abraham thy father, and the GOD of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will*

keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28:13-15, emphasis mine, RK).

"the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Genesis 31:3).

Seir was the homeland of Esau, and Jacob said that he would visit him there. Some have accused Jacob of being deceptive with his brother, never intending to visit him. Just because there is no record of such a trivial thing does not mean that they did not visit one another from time to time. They certainly had friendly relations later when their father died and they buried him together (Genesis 35:29).

Esau left for Seir, and Jacob journeyed to Succoth. The name "Succoth" means *"booths."* This place was on the east side of Jordan near the Jabbok. This would have been a good ford the Jordan River. It might also be remembered that this was a stopping place for the Israelites before they entered the land of Canaan after leaving Egypt. The text states that he built a "house" there, which indicates they stayed there for some time. This house should probably not be viewed as a permanent dwelling, as one builds today (brick and mortar, etc).

The word "booths" for his cattle comes from sukkah, which is defined as *"a hut or lair"* (Strong).

Genesis 33:18-20 "And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel."

"And Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram; and encamped before the city. And he bought the parcel of ground, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-israel" (ASV)

"And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem" Note that the place Jacob came to was a city of Shechem. "Shalem" means *"peace,"* and some have

identified it as a name for ancient Jerusalem (Strong; Brown/Driver/Briggs). The phrase "a city **of** Shechem" would seem to identify it as a city belonging to Shechem. Or it may be that Shechem was in control of lesser cities around it, Shalem being one of those cities. The Septuagint reads "Shalem" at this place, thus, a preferable reading to the NKJV and ASV.

Padan-aram is the place where he began his journey after leaving Laban.

"Padan-aram" — *"field, a plain or tableland in northern Mesopotamia in Aram, a region of Syria"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

At Shalem, Jacob bought a piece of ground from the descendants of Hamor, who was Shechem's father.

"field" — wadeh waday – *"to spread out, a field (as flat)"* (Strong); *"field, land, cultivated field...plain (opposed to mountain)"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

It is also revealed that the field cost him one hundred pieces of money. This was the second piece of land purchased by Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 23:17-18). This is where he set up his tent and built an altar to GOD. The altar was named "El-elohe-Israel," which being interpreted is *"the mighty God of Israel"* (Strong). This is the first time Jacob appears to use the name given to him by GOD. There is no doubt that Jacob was saying two things about GOD: (1) GOD is mighty, and (2) GOD is my GOD!

Genesis 34

Gen. 34:1-7 "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done."

"And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And

> Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her; And he took her, and lay with her, and humbled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; and his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they came. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done." (ASV)

Morris made the interesting observation that *"Young people need companionship with others of their own age."* This writer might add that they also need companionship with their own sex of the same age. He then went on to talk about that her eleven brothers probably had that among themselves. But what about Dinah? She was the only girl. She probably longed for someone she could talk to, to share secrets with, to talk about life in general with those who approached things from the same general perspective.

Dinah is introduced in this text as the daughter of Leah, Jacob's first wife. The text says she went out to "see" the women of the land.

"see" – raah – *"to see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

Scholars place her age as being between thirteen and fifteen at this time. This is a very impressionable time in life, as well as a time of innocence (should be). In this case, her innocence betrayed her and put her in position to be compromised. Did she go out merely out of curiosity? Did she go without consulting her parents? Did she go in rebellion to her parents? The answer to these questions cannot be known from the text. But most writers seem to agree that, at that time, unattended young women were fair game among the Egyptians and Canaanites. If so, she placed herself in danger and paid the price.

Shechem is presented as a "prince" (leader) of the land. His father is Hamor. They are presented as being Hivites. It should be remembered that all of the nations in this area were generally known as Canaanites, while one particular nation was also known as Canaanites. It is clear that the primary responsibility for what happened in this text rested upon Shechem — he "saw," he "took," he "lay," and he "defiled her." Thus, the language used indicates that he raped her.

Unlike Amnon in Second Samuel chapter thirteen,

Shechem loved Dinah and wanted to marry her. Marriages in that time were arranged by the parents, so he told his father to get her for him. It is interesting that no apology, no admission of wrong-doing was offered for what happened, which seems to indicate that this was possibly a common occurrence.

One is not told how Jacob got the news, but it was not from Dinah, for she remained in the house of Shechem. News tends to travel fast, especially if it is bad news. Jacob did not have a "knee-jerk" reaction to the news. Instead, he waited for his sons to come in from the fields. When one allows his emotions to dictate his actions, as will be seen in Jacob's sons, the result is often disastrous. Before his sons came from the field, Hamor arrived on the scene to arrange the marriage. It is possible that Hamor was the one who told Jacob what had happened.

The reaction of Jacob's sons was predictable. First, the text says they were "grieved:"

"grieved" — atsab — *"pain or anger"* (Strong); *"to hurt, pain, grieve, displease, vex, wrest"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

Second, the text says they were "wroth."

"wroth" — charah — *"to be hot, furious, burn, become angry, be kindled"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

Why did they react in this way? One might initially attribute their reaction simply to the fact that their little sister had been raped. But there is more to it than that simple thought. They said "folly" had been committed, "folly in Israel."

"folly" — nebalah — *"wickedness; concretely a crime"* (Strong); *"senselessness,...disgraceful folly...of immorality, profane actions"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

Israel had not yet become a nation; therefore, the text does not say this was wickedness against the Israelites. This was wickedness against the prince of Israel — Jacob. Further, this text says this "thing ought not to be done." It is agreed that rape ought not to be done to anyone, but there is more to this. They seem to have understood that they were to remain separate from the people of the land, i.e., not mingling their blood-line with these other people. Note that one of the definitions of "folly" (given above) is *"profane actions."* Esau was a profane person, why? Because he could not distinguish between common and sacred things. Jacob's sons seem to have been able to understand the difference. Jacob had a sacred relationship with GOD.

Gen. 34:8-12 "And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife."

> "And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you, give her unto him to wife. And make ye marriages with us; give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find favor in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife." (ASV)

Hamor spoke to Jacob and his sons and expressed that his son "longed" for Dinah to be his wife.

"Longeth" — chashaq — *"to love, be attached to, long for"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

It appears that even though Shechem had violated Dinah, he truly loved her. Further, it appears that he was willing to do whatever it would take to right the wrong done to her. Understand, he could never truly right the wrong done, but he did seem to being willing to accept the consequences for his actions – to a certain extent.

Hamor though, saw an opportunity to compromise and engulf Jacob's family, as is seen in more detail later (v. 23). Hamor suggested that they form a kind of treaty with each other by allowing their sons and daughters to intermarry. With time, this would have caused the two peoples to become one people. But this was not GOD's plan for Abraham's seed. They were to remain a distinct people. Abraham had commanded his servant not to get a Canaanite wife for Isaac. The Israelites (as they would come to be known) were to remain a separate people. When the Mosaic law was instituted by GOD, they were commanded not to marry or make covenants with the people of the promised land (Deuteronomy 7).

> "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your GOD. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant

of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your GOD will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your GOD hath given you" (Joshua 23:11-13).

Hamor suggested that if his proposal for inter-marriage was accepted, then there would be financial gain for Jacob and his people. The world seems to think that financial gain is the greatest motive that drives men. Such is not the case for those who follow in the footsteps of Abraham and the One who was promised of his seed.

Shechem now entered the negotiations. Too many writers attribute evil motives to Shechem here. This does not seem to be the case. This writer chooses to give him the benefit of the doubt by saying that he believes Shechem truly loved Dinah and wanted her to be his bride. Shechem said he was willing to pay whatever price they asked in order to have Dinah. Under the law of Moses, rape and its penalty were codified by GOD. Part of the penalty was a payment to the father for what the rapist had done.

"If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days" (Deuteronomy 22:28-29).

Gen. 34:13-17 "And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone."

"And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with guile, and spake, because he had defiled Dinah their sister, and said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to

> give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us. Only on this condition will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised; then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone." (ASV)

Note that it was the sons of Jacob who dealt deceitfully with Hamor and his people. Jacob was not involved in this plot, as will clearly be seen in verse thirty.

"deceitfully" — mirmah — *"fraud"* (Strong); *"deceit, treachery"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs); *"craft, deceit, fraud, falsehood, guile, treachery"* (Zodhiates).

In viewing the rest of the context, one cannot help but wonder if it were Simeon and Levi who devised the deception of Hamor and his people. If their brothers were not involved, they certainly later participated in destroying the city and taking the spoils.

Why did the brothers act "deceitfully" toward the Hivites? Because Shechem had defiled (polluted, made unclean) their sister. At this point, it would be good to note that *"two wrongs do not make a right."* Shechem sinned in raping Dinah, and Jacob's sons sinned in deceiving the Hivites. Two wrongs will lead to more wrong! Simeon and Levi (and their descendants) will suffer long-term consequences for their actions in this account (See chapter forty-nine.). The men of Shechem lost their lives, and their wives and children become slaves to Jacob's sons. Further, instead of their gaining the possessions of the Israelites, the Israelites took all of their possessions.

Circumcision was given as a sign of the covenant relationship of Abraham and his descendants with GOD. It was to be administered to everyone born in Abraham's family and everyone who was an outsider who was bought by Abraham's family. This would naturally include the fact that they would be taught to obey GOD's commands. It should thus be noted that Jacob's sons did not demand that the Hivites give up their idols and serve GOD. It was simply an act of circumcision that was demanded. The act alone would not make Shechem an acceptable candidate to marry their sister. Coffman believes the possibility exists that they never thought the Hivites would consent to all being circumcised so that Shechem could have Dinah as his wife. This writer believes they knew exactly what they were doing and planned to do.

Hamor had suggested the possibility of intermarriage and thus the combining of their two peoples. Jacob's sons used the same language to entice them into being circumcised. Further, they stated that if the Hivites would not agree to these conditions, then they would take their sister and depart. The original word for "take" has a wide range of meanings.

> "take" — laqach — *"to take, get, fetch, lay hold of, seize, receive, acquire, buy, bring, marry, take a wife, snatch, take away"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

They did not intend on becoming "one people" with the Hivites. Instead, their goal was revenge. Instead of seeking GOD's advice in settling this matter, they decided what should be done.

> "To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deuteronomy 32:35).

> "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Gen. 34:18-24 "And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city."

> "And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was

> honored above all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for, behold, the land is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men consent unto us to dwell with us, to become one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance and all their beasts be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city." (ASV)

Hamor and Shechem liked what they heard. Shechem liked it because he wanted Dinah to be his wife, and he did not consider this to be too high a price to gain her. Hamor, on the other hand was happy because he saw a way to increase his stuff. They were both ready to do what Jacob's sons asked. But there was one problem, they had to convince their people to submit to circumcision.

The KJV says Shechem "was more honourable than all the house of his father" (NKJV as well). The better translation here is found in the ASV – "he was honored above all the house of his father." It is stating that the people held him in very high esteem.

A conference was held at the city gate. The city gate was where ancient people held their councils, traded, and where legal decisions were made by the judges. Here the terms of the "treaty" with Jacob's sons were discussed. They were told that these were peaceable people and that they should be allowed to live in their land. Further, they were told the advantages in regard to trade, and that eventually they would be one people through intermarriage. The only thing they had to do was consent to the surgery of circumcision. The decision was made to have all the men circumcised. What would cause them to agree to this very painful surgery? Was it because of the respect they had for their leaders? Was it a blind obedience because of fear of their leaders? Clarke, in his commentary on this passage, offers examples from history showing that if a ruler commanded his people to kill themselves that they would immediately follow his command. Was it greed which motivated them?

> *"As is often the case, when 'every one agrees,' only* one *was doing the thinking"* (Coffman, p. 418).

The result – "every male was circumcised."

Gen. 34:25-29 "And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house."

> "And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city unawares, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went forth. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their flocks and their herds and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field; and all their wealth, and all their little ones and their wives, took they captive and made a prey, even all that was in the house." (ASV)

The third day after the circumcision would have been the most painful time for these men and would in effect neutralize their ability to defend themselves from attack. This is when Simeon and Levi took their swords and murdered every man in the city. Did their brothers know of their plan ahead of time? Were the servants of these two brothers involved in the murders? At any rate, nothing justified the deeds of these brothers – they were simply guilty of the worst kind of cruelty, deceit, vengeance, and murder. Let it be noted that if they had asked GOD what to do, He might have commanded them to kill the men and destroy the city — and it would have been all right. The problem was that they did not consult GOD in this matter. GOD might have directed them to use a totally different mode of handling this situation.

After killing Shechem and Hamor, they took Dinah and left. Then the other brothers came into play. Whereas two sons are named as the murderers, "the sons of Jacob" came upon the dead and plundered the entire city so that nothing of any value was left. Taking the little ones and the women was probably for the purpose of making them slaves. Their excuse – "because they had defiled their sister."

Note the following words of Coffman as he detailed the "gross wickedness" of Jacob's sons in this matter.

"The shameful deeds of gross wickedness in evidence here includes these: (1) They desecrated the sacred rite of circumcision. Making it the means of their brutal cruelty and murder of a whole city. (2) They 'took' all the wives of the slain, a violation as sinister and damnable as the rape of Dinah, thus multiplying endlessly the very sin they claimed they were avenging. (3) They shamelessly backed out of an agreement they themselves had proposed, doing so even after the Shechemites had kept their part of it to the letter. (4) Their robbery of all the property and wealth of the city itself, as well as of all that was in the field, was a horrible example of greedy avarice. (5) They made a 'prey' of women and helpless children, whom they either kept for their own profit and lust, or sold into slavery. Never was there a darker day to cast its shadow over the people of God" (p. 419).

Gen. 34:30-31 "And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?"

> "And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me, to make me odious to the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and, I being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and smite me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?" (ASV)

It is evident from the text that Jacob had nothing to do with the plans of Simeon and Levi. When he heard what they had done, he was appalled. Who could he blame for this tragedy? The simple answer is himself. Instead of handling this matter himself, he had left it up to his sons. Their immaturity allowed their passions to rule, and the tragedy ensued. They were GOD's people, but instead of acting like GOD's people, they acted like the base heathen around them. They claimed moral purity; but they had atrociously deceived, murdered and plundered.

Jacob said they had "troubled" him and made him to "stink" to the Canaanites and Perizzites.

"troubled" – akar – *"properly to roil water; figuratively to disturb or afflict"* (Thayer); *"to*

trouble, stir up, disturb, make (someone) taboo" (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

Jacob imagined the people of the land becoming so indignant at what his sons had done that they would rise up against them and destroy them all, as they had done to Shechem.

> *"God had delivered them from Laban and from Esau, both with relatively small bands of followers, when Jacob's cause was right. But how could they expect divine protection from the great host of ungodly Canaanites surrounding them when they themselves were in the wrong"* (Morris p. 516)?

Where was Jacob's faith? GOD had promised to make Jacob's generations as the sands of the sea "which cannot be numbered for multitude" (Genesis 32:12). Thinking like the heathen, he expected them to join forces to destroy his family. Why did GOD protect Jacob and his family? They had committed a terrible crime by human standards and a great sin by GOD's standards. It is this writer's belief that GOD can change the most rebellious sinner into a vessel fit for honor. GOD shows the pitfalls of His servants for a purpose. If one was not shown their "warts" and only saw them as righteous men, then where would our hope stand today? Might not one tend to get discouraged and give up because he could not meet their "perfect" standards? One will see even more of their warts in the future, but by the time their history is finished, they will have become great leaders of the nation – they will have matured. GOD knew what Jacob's sons could become, and He had plans for them. But this did not make what they did on this occasion right.

> *"The thoughtlessness of young men who rush headlong into ill-considered projects was abundantly displayed by this massacre"* (Leupold, p. 911).

> *"Jacob was alarmed, but his sons were not impressed by it. The honor of their sister was worth more to them than the risk of their own lives. Thus it always is. Those who are young and have not fully lived place relatively little value upon life, and venture into mortal danger without fear. Those who have lived much longer tend to nurse life to its last hour"* (Francisco, p. 408).

The defense of Jacob's sons seems to be, *"Should we have let him treat our sister like a harlot and do nothing?"* To what were they appealing? Was it not the

emotions of the moment? It is good to have emotion, but it should never be allowed to trump reason.

> *"the entire Pentateuch aims to set forth how God's gracious care led on the undeserving people of His choice from grace to grace"* (Leupold, p. 910).

Their defense was found wanting — nothing could excuse their deeds. What they did was not sanctioned by GOD nor their father, who had gained GOD's favor. Why then were they not severely punished at this time? They will suffer for their sins, but it will be many years from the present text at the side of their dying father's bed.

> "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:5-7, emphasis mine, R.K.).

Genesis Chapter Thirty-five

Gen. 35:1-7 "And GOD said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto GOD, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto GOD, Who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of GOD was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there GOD appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother."

> "And GOD said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto GOD, who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household,

and to all that were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto GOD, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hand, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and a terror of GOD was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Beth-el), he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because there GOD was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother." (ASV)

The details are hidden, but it would be interesting to know if Jacob had gone to GOD in prayer regarding the terrible actions of his sons, and it was then that GOD spoke to him. Or, did GOD simply speak, giving him these instructions?

Jacob was commanded by GOD to go to Bethel, where GOD had appeared to him when he fled from his brother's murderous intentions. At that time, Jacob had made a vow to GOD.

> "Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If GOD will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my GOD: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be GOD's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28:20-22).

Before leaving the country, Jacob had built an altar to GOD here and renamed the place. As will be seen in this text, the former name had been Luz [*"almond tree"* (BDB)]. Jacob called this place "Bethel" (house of GOD). But before Jacob could make the present journey, a purification was going to be necessary. Why? Because they were going to be in the presence of GOD.

Jacob ordered his people to do three things in preparation for the journey to Bethel. (1) "put away the strange gods" [nekar – *"foreign"* (Strong)]. How had these strange gods come among them?

> *"This included 'the household idols' that Rachel had stolen from her father (31:19), plus any others that his family or servants had, as well as any that the people of Shechem might have brought along"* (Grasham, p. 301).

GOD cannot be worshipped while idols are in the

possession of His creation. (2) "be clean" This was not the idea of taking a bath. This was a purification which was being spoken of and was another requirement for all who would come before GOD. This was a ceremonial cleansing which signified the change of heart and willingness to obey GOD. (3) "change your garments" Their garments likely had become contaminated with the blood of those they had murdered. Note — when they came before GOD, they were not to wear any old clothing. The idea seems to be a change into something more suitable for approaching GOD. In The Revelation, fine and clean linen was a sign of the righteousness of the saved (Revelation 19:7-8). Is there a lesson to be learned today when one comes before GOD to worship Him?

What would be done with the idols they were to put away? Jacob buried them under a tree. The significance of this seems to be a putting away of idolatry, out of sight no longer to be practiced. The "earrings" seem to have the significance of a kind of talisman or other religious significance. They were often adorned by symbols or strange writing.

"earrings" — nezem — *"a nose ring: {earring} jewel"* (Strong); *"ring, nose ring, earring"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

Jacob expressed fear that the inhabitants of the land would rise up against them because of what Simeon and Levi had done (19:30). But GOD, obviously through providence, caused the people of the land to be terrified, so that they left them alone as they traveled to Bethel. By protecting them, it should be observed that GOD was not condoning their previous action. He had a purpose for Jacob's family which must be fulfilled, even if Simeon and Levi had acted in such a sinful manner. Arriving at Bethel, Jacob built an altar to GOD and named it "Elbethel" [*"God of the house of God"* (BDB)]. This was the place where he had been introduced to GOD by direct revelation.

Gen. 35:8 "But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth."

> "And Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried below Beth-el under the oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bacuth." (ASV)

It is interesting to see this particular verse and realize it is inserted for a reason. Deborah, as Rebekah's nurse, would have had a great deal to do with Jacob's upbringing. She was sent with Rebekah to

care for her when she was married to Isaac. It is not stated when she became a part of Jacob's household, though that is the implication here. There must have been great affection between her and Jacob. She must have been quite a force in this family in order to have her name and burial mentioned in the Scriptures. Further, it seems to indicate that Jacob may have visited his father, or possibly Isaac had sent her to him.

> *"Old nurses, like her, were not only honored, but loved as mothers; and accordingly, her death was the occasion of a great lamentation"* (Jamieson/Fausset/Brown, p. 223).

> *"Many have commented upon the fact that Deborah, a woman of low estate, should be accorded this special and devoted reference, whereas her mistress Rebekah died and was buried with no notice whatever in the event itself appearing anywhere in the sacred text"* (Coffman, p. 427).

The place where Deborah was buried seems to have been on the plain below Bethel. It was under an "oak" (terebinth) tree. This tree was then given the name "Allonbachuth" – "tree of weeping" (Zuck, p. 84). She was no doubt very old at this time, perhaps in the one-hundred-and-seventy-year range.

Gen. 35:9-15 "And GOD appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And GOD said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And GOD said unto him, I am GOD Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And GOD went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where GOD spake with him, Bethel."

> "And GOD appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And GOD said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And GOD said unto him, I am GOD Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac, to thee I

will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And GOD went up from him in the place where he spake with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He spake with him, a pillar of stone: and he poured out a drink-offering thereon, and poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where GOD spake with him, Beth-el." (ASV)

This text is a reaffirmation of two things: (1) The giving of GOD's promises to Jacob when he was fleeing from Esau at Bethel (28:11ff). (2) The reaffirmation of his new name as recorded first in Genesis 32:28. Both of these instances would have been considered firsts: first time the covenant was promised, and the first time his new name was given. It is a common thing for GOD to reaffirm important things in His word.

After Jacob was told the first time that his name was to be changed to Israel, he did not seem to use it. As Coffman stated, this seems to not only be a reaffirmation of that change, but now he is to use that name to designate himself and later to designate the nation as a whole (p. 429).

At the beginning of mankind (Genesis 1), GOD had told man to be fruitful and multiply. This writer believes GOD was now telling the people of Israel to multiply and become the great "nation and a company of nations" He promised. This could not refer individually to Jacob, because he had already produced eleven sons and would have only one more.

"And GOD went up from him in the place where he talked with him." It appears from this verse that GOD met with Jacob on this occasion in a visible manifestation, which is probably the second person of the GODHEAD (a theophany). Upon GOD's leaving him, Jacob set up a pillar, just as he had done on the first appearance to him of GOD at Bethel. He poured out a drink offering to GOD, which Grasham states is the only time in Genesis that a drink offering is found (p. 306). Jacob also poured oil on the pillar, which appears to be an anointing of it. After this, he reaffirmed the name of this place as the house of GOD ("Bethel").

After fleeing from his brother, Jacob had begun a journey from Bethel, where GOD had promised to be with him and bless him abundantly. Now, over thirty years later, he had returned with great riches in safety and his name was changed. Truly this was a much different person from the one who had originally left this place.

Gen. 35:16-20 "And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and

Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day."

> "And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was still some distance to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; for now thou shalt have another son. And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem). And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave: the same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." (ASV)

It is not known how long they remained at Bethel, but at some point they continued their journey. As they journeyed, they came close to Ephrath, which is an ancient name for Bethlehem. Sometimes the two words are used together, as in Micah 5:2 – "Bethlehem-Ephratah. As they journeyed, Rachel went into "hard labor," which signifies a difficult labor.

The mid-wife assured Rachel that she was going to have this child and that it would be a son. How did she know what the child would be? This is where some speculate that this may have been a breech birth. It is remembered that Rachel had told Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (Genesis 30:1). GOD gave her children, this one in her old age, and it cost her her life. It is also remembered that when Rachel bore Joseph, she predicted, "The LORD shall add to me another son" (Genesis 30:24).

As this child was being born, and Rachel's life was ending, she named this child "Ben-oni," which means *"son of my sorrow"* (Strong). This would not be a beneficial name for this boy to carry through his life, so Jacob renamed him "Benjamin," i.e., *"son of the right hand"* (Strong). When Rachel died, Jacob buried her and set up a memorial stone on her grave.

There is an important phrase in this section of Scripture which needs to be considered – "as her soul was departing, (for she died)." Her body and soul were two separate entities. Her body remained and returned to the dust of the ground, but her soul continued to live, i.e., the soul is eternal.

"Materialists of various kinds deny that anything

lives after the death of the body. That all there is of a human being dies at one time and thus nothing leaves. But here is the plain statement of an inspired writer that her soul departed. This upsets the doctrine of materialism" (Zerr, p. 81).

Gen. 35:21-22 "And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:"

> "And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it came to pass, while Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:" (ASV)

After Rachel's death, Jacob continued his journey to a place described as "beyond the tower of Edar." This phrase is from migdal-eder, which Brown/Driver/Briggs state to mean, *"tower of the flock...a shepherd's watchtower near Bethlehem."* The exact location of this place is unknown, but believed by some to be south of Jerusalem.

After some time of living there, one is told that Reuben "lay with Bilhah." This simply means that he had sexual relations with his father's concubine, i.e., he committed adultery with her. It should be remembered that a concubine was considered to be one's wife, but with lesser rights than the first wife (Leah), especially with regard to inheritance. One is further informed that Israel heard of it. Strangely, nothing seems to have been said or done about this matter at the present time. But it was not forgotten, as the text of chapter forty-nine (verses 3-4) reveals. Reuben's actions on this occasion would cost him the birthright, which would be given instead to Joseph.

> "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright" (1 Chronicles 5:1).

Gen. 35:23-27 "The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram. And

Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned."

> "The sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid: Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid: Gad and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Paddan-aram. And Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, to Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac sojourned." (ASV)

It might surprise some that, when this list of the patriarchs was given, Leah was mentioned first. But this is undoubtedly because she was Jacob's first wife. The children are not listed in order of their births, but in the order in which their individual mothers bore them. It is also interesting to note that Jacob's first wife had as many children as all of his "concubines" combined. Looking at the context, this was a good time to list them, since they were about to meet their grandfather Isaac. Even though Isaac was blind, he would know that GOD had fulfilled the blessing bestowed upon Jacob by Isaac. A generality is also stated, in that his sons were said to be born in Padan-aram, while it is observed that one of them was actually born in Canaan.

At this time, Isaac is shown to be living in Hebron. At some time after Jacob left him at Beersheba, Isaac had moved to this region. GOD had promised to bring Israel back to the land (Genesis 28:15), and He did.

Gen. 35:28-29 "And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

> "And the days of Isaac were a hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, old and full of days: and Esau and Jacob his sons buried him." (ASV)

The death of Isaac is now mentioned. His death is listed out of order in the text.

> *"It is supposed that he lived at least twelve years after Joseph was sold into Egypt"* (Clarke, p. 214).

> *"Isaac's death is now reported, though it did not take place for another twelve or thirteen years... Strange to say, Isaac lived to witness Jacob's grief over Joseph"* (Leupold, p. 929).

"When Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was seventeen years old. When he stood before Pharaoh he was thirty (41:46). Seven years later when Joseph was thirty-seven, Jacob came to Egypt at the age of 130 (47:9). Consequently Jacob must have been ninety-three at Joseph's birth and at the time of our chapter 93 + 15, i.e., about 108 years. But Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born; 108 + 60 = 168 = Isaac's age when Jacob returned home" (IBID).

Regarding the phrase "Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people," this shows a clear understanding that there is life after death. These ancients knew that there was life after death and looked forward to it.

Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD...These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:10, 13).

Again the notes of Zerr on materialism are noted below.

"If materialism is true then a man at death does not give up anything. He would retain everything that had ever been a part of him. But the statement that he did give up something disproves materialism" (IBID).

Where was Isaac buried? In the cave at Machpelah.

"In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah" (Genesis 49:30-31).

These two brothers had been estranged because of Jacob's lies and Esau's treatment of holy things as nothing more than common things. They were reunited when Esau and Jacob met on Jacob's return from Mesopotamia. And now the bond of brotherhood seems to have been strengthened by the passing of their father and his burial.

In the next chapter, Esau's descendants take precedence briefly, and then the rest of the book deals with Jacob's descendants, especially Joseph. Considering that Esau was profane, it seems appropriate that this is the case.

Genesis Chapter Thirty-six

(Toledoth of Esau)

Gen. 36:1-8 "Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Bashemath bare Reuel; And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan. And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom."

> "Now these are the generations of Esau (the same is Edom). Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite, and Basemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebaioth. And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Basemath bare Reuel; and Oholibamah bare Jeush, and Jalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, that were born unto him in the land of Canaan. And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the souls of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his possessions, which he had gather in the land of Canaan; and went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their substance was too great for them to dwell together; and the land of their sojournings could not bear them because of their cattle. And Esau dwelt in mount Seir: Esau is Edom." (ASV)

This is the beginning of the nation known as Edom (the descendants of Esau). This fact will be noted a number of times in this chapter. There has been much written about the difference in the names of Esau's wives here compared with earlier lists. It is not uncommon for people to have two names or to have their name's changed because of some event in the Bible. Or it may be that two of his wives had died and were replaced by two new ones. It is this writer's belief that these may be different names because of entering into the marriage arrangement. It is noted that Esau did not take his wives from the Abrahamic lineage, but rather from the nations dwelling in the land. It is

remembered that his doing so was a great disappointment to Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 26:34-35).

Verses six through eight show the time when Esau moved permanently to Mount Seir, the land which took on his name – Edom. He took everything he had and left the presence of Jacob. It is noteworthy that they did not leave each other's company because of strife, as did Lot and Abraham. Instead, they left on peaceable terms, because the land simply could not support them both. Had Esau come to grips with the fact that he was not to inherit this land? Whatever the case, they now left each other, which no doubt is in part, if not the whole, due to GOD's providential work.

Gen. 36:9-14 "And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir: These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah."

> "And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir: these are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these are the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jalam, and Korah." (ASV)

This section begins by certifying that Esau was indeed the father of the nation known as Edomites. In the previous section (vv. 1-8), the generations of Esau began with those born in Canaan. This section deals with those born after the separation from Jacob and with the land in Mount Seir.

In verse twelve, one also sees the beginning of a nation that hated the Israelites — the Amalekites. The Bible does not state why the Amalekites and Israelites were such bitter enemies. It does reveal that, in the

wilderness wanderings of the fledgling nation of the Israelites, Amalekites attacked them without seeming provocation. Yet, something must have caused this (Exodus 17:8-16). Because of their cowardly attack on this occasion, GOD told Jushua, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Years later, King Saul was commanded to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel 15:3). It might be added that Saul only partially did GOD's bidding.

Gen. 36:15-19 "These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah. And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these are the dukes that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their dukes."

> "These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the first-born of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek: these are the chiefs that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah. And these are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah: these are the chiefs that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah: these are the chiefs that came of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Esau, and these are their chiefs: the same is Edom." (ASV)

The primary purpose of this section was to list those who became leaders — the dukes (Chiefs).

> *"The term, though used in the general sense of ruler by the later Hebrew writers (Jer. 13:21; Zech. 9:7; 12:5-6), is exclusively employed in the Pentateuch as a designation of the Edomite princes, corresponding to the title of shiekhs among the modern bedouins"* (JFB, p. 227).

One of the things this list seems to point to is that the descendants of Esau seem to have organized and

become prominent at an early stage in their development. It also shows that GOD kept his promise, and Esau's descendants were numerous.

Gen. 36:20-30 "These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom. And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. And the children of Anah were these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. And these are the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. The children of Ezer are these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan. The children of Dishan are these; Uz, and Aran. These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir."

> "These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah, and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan: these are the chiefs that came of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom. And the children of Lotan were Hori and Heman. And Lotan's sister was Timna. And these are the children of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam. And these are the children of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah; this is Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. And these are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah. And these are the children of Dishon: Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. These are the children of Ezer: Bilhan and Zaavan and Akan. These are the children of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These are the chiefs that came of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan: these are the chiefs that came of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir." (ASV)

> "These are the sons of Seir the Horite" *"Seir, with a colony of Horites from Lebanon, settled in the mountains south of Canaan a generation before the time of Abraham, and in their new possessions continued that mode of life to which they had been accustomed in their original settlement – viz., that of dwelling in caves on account of the intense heat. Hence they were*

called (in our version, Horites) Troglodytes; and doubtless they were the excavators of those wonderful rock-habitations which abound in the ravines and the soft limestone cliffs around Petra" (Robinson as quoted by J.F.B., p. 228).

Why are these people listed here, when the lineage of Esau is under consideration? Was it because they were confederates with the descendants of Esau? Or were they absorbed into the people of Esau, eventually losing their identity, becoming Edomites?

The word "mule" is interesting in this text. The original is yem, a word that is not used anywhere else in the Bible and has a very uncertain meaning. The word "mule" to the Western mind, refers to an animal which is the offspring of a horse and a donkey, usually being sterile. But when one looks at the Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and other ancient translations, it soon becomes evident that no one seems to know the real meaning of the original word. The versions in our possession today variously say the meaning is "hot springs," "water," "oasis," or "mules."

"Esau took over the country, but the pagan culture of Seir took over the Edomites" (Coffman, p. 441).

Gen. 36:31-39 "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. And Saul died, and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab."

"And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad

died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. And Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth by the River reigned in his stead. And Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-zahab." (ASV)

"before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" It should be remembered that the children of Israel were never supposed to have had a human king ruling over them. Their king was to be GOD. This phrase shows two things: (1) Someday they would have a king, and (2) The Edomites had human kings long before one was appointed in Israel. Further, it should be noted that Moses (through inspiration) predicted that Israel would rebel against GOD and demand a king. Just as GOD revealed this information to Moses, He also told him the parameters for such a king, and how he would bring hurt and oppression to GOD's people.

"When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy GOD shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his GOD, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

Gen. 36:40-43 "And these are the names of the dukes

that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he is Esau the father of the Edomites."

> "And these are the names of the chiefs that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, chief Magdiel, chief Iram: these are the chiefs of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession. This is Esau, the father of the Edomites." (ASV)

This finishes the list of the descendants of Esau and the lands over which they ruled. Moses will not mention Esau again in his writings. This chapter seems to point to the fact that GOD fulfilled his promise to Isaac regarding Esau.

Genesis Chapter Thirty-seven

Toledoth of Jacob

Gen. 37:1-2 "And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report."

> "And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought the evil report of them unto their father." (ASV)

Canaan would one day belong to the family of Abraham, but for now, his descendants were all simply temporary dwellers in this land.

> "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13).

From the passage above, it is evident that they were content to let GOD provide this land in His own time frame. Remember that Abraham was able to raise a pretty-good-sized army, yet he did not try to conquer the land. By the time of his grandson (Jacob), the number of military people that could have been raised would

have been considerably more.

Since Joseph will be the principal character in the rest of Genesis, it is proper here to note several things about him. (1) He was seventeen years old, (2) he was employed in "feeding the flock," and (3) he gave a bad report to his father concerning his brothers. The first of these three things is self-explanatory. He was employed as a shepherd.

> "feeding" — raah —*"A verb meaning to feed, to tend; to be a shepherd. It means in general to care for, to protect, to graze, to feed flocks and herds"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1065).

Israel's family had grown, and his flocks and herds had also grown large in number. A number of years before this, it was seen that Esau and Israel had parted ways because their animals were so many that the land would not support them. Further, these were not cared for the way they are today in the West, where food is basically brought to the animals. They would have to keep moving these animals from time to time to find enough pasture. This will be seen later when Joseph was sent to see how his brothers were doing. They were not at the pasturage where they were expected to be, but rather had moved on to other fields.

His responsibilities as a shepherd not only entailed doing what was best for the flocks and herds, but it also required one to be a faithful steward. As a steward, he would be required to give a report of that with which he had been entrusted. This event also shows that he had the courage to stand and do what was right without fear of his older brothers. The Bible does not reveal what the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah did. It simply says, "Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Whatever it was, Joseph was being a good steward of his father's goods.

> "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23).

With what follows in the text, one cannot help but consider that this report (in part) may have contributed to Joseph's brothers' intense dislike for him.

> *"Joseph's motive in conveying this report seems to have been good. He was the one son who had spiritual kinship with his father. He had nobler ideals than did his brothers"* (Leupold, p. 954).

Gen. 37:3-4 "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all

his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."

> "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren; and they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." (ASV)

"the son of his old age" Several of the commentators believe that this phrase shows Joseph to be a wise son.

> *"Literally rendered, it is 'son of old age to him' — Hebrew phrase for 'a wise son' — one who possessed observation and wisdom above his years — an old head on young shoulders"* (JFB, p. 230).

> *"Chaldee, Persian, Arabic, and Samaritan, render the words thus, a wise or prudent son; old age oft being mentioned as a token of prudence; one born old, one wise above his years, one that had a grey head, as we say, upon green shoulders"* (Poole, p. 83).

> *"By this very garment the father expressed his thought that this son should have pre-eminence over the rest. For Reuben had sacrificed his claim by incest. Simeon and Levi were poor candidates for leaders because of their headstrong cruelty"* (Leupold, p. 955).

This seemed to indicate that Jacob intended to give Joseph the birthright, which eventually he did (See Genesis 49 and 50).

Jacob made Joseph a special coat or tunic. It was composed of many patches of colors which signified a special rank above his brothers. This action by Jacob, to a certain extent, appears to be brought on by the providence of GOD. Joseph needed to be separated from his brethren in order that they could overcome a great famine. Further, GOD's providence would cause Joseph to become a great leader in Egypt, causing the Israelites to move there where they would become a mighty nation. It was also necessary to move the Hebrews to Egypt in order to fulfill the prophecy of their enslavement. But for the present, Joseph's brothers envied Joseph and caused great conflict between him and themselves.

> *"Whatever colors or style Joseph's garment possessed, it was evidently an upper-class robe which was not designed for manual labor"*

(Grasham, p. 344).

The text says, "they hated him." Part of the definitions given for "hated" by Zodhiates includes the idea of a violent hatred. This could help explain their actions later in this chapter when they considered killing him. Israel's unveiled favoritism toward Joseph is clearly revealed to his brothers. Added to the reason for their hatred were the dreams Joseph had which pointed to his superiority.

The text further states, "and could not speak peaceably unto him." The common greeting given in that time seems to have been *"Peace"* or *"Peace be to you."* Their hatred of Joseph seems to mean they would not wish him peace when they met him. The tension between Joseph and his brothers was growing.

Gen. 37:5-8 "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

> "And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words." (ASV)

Was Joseph's dream simply a dream anyone could have had? Or was his dream given to him by GOD in order to reveal the future to him and his family? There is no doubt in this writer's mind that GOD sent this dream to Joseph. It should be remembered that before the Christian age, dreams were one of the ways GOD communicated with people – both His people and others (Nebuchadnezzar).

> "GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Today, GOD speaks to His people through the written word, and that alone.

One thing which should be emphasized is that the Egyptian bondage was necessary to develop the nation. GOD had told Abraham that such would be the case in Genesis 15:13.

> "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years."

GOD could have chosen war to accomplish His goal, but instead He chose to move Israel's family through the events of Joseph's slavery and eventual rise to the second most powerful man in Egypt. Israel's servitude then took place when a Pharaoh came to power who "knew not Joseph."

It is interesting to this writer that GOD used sheaves of grain to signify Joseph's rise to power over his brothers. Years later it would be grain which brought them to Egypt and caused them literally to bow before Joseph. And still later salvation from the drought of sin would be the bread of life.

It is also observed how Joseph's dreams helped the spark of jealousy in his brothers to grow into deep hatred for their brother — a hatred upon which they later acted. In the minds of these brothers there was no way they would allow Joseph to rule over them. In a sense they asked him, *"Do you really think you will rule over us?"*

> *"God was using the wicked partiality of Jacob, the foolish immaturity of Joseph, and the sadistic hatred of his hardened brothers to bring about the transfer of all Israel into Egypt"* (Coffman, p. 450).

Gen. 37:9-11 "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying."

> "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream: and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy

mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind." (ASV)

Joseph had another dream similar to the first one. Remember that his first dream caused his brothers to envy and hate him more than they had before. It can only be imagined how this dream would increase their hatred for him.

In this dream, Joseph's brothers were portrayed as stars, and his parents as the Sun and moon. They all gathered around Joseph and bowed before him (an act of submission). Again, the dream portrayed Joseph as their ruler, as did his first dream.

There is another passage which speaks of the Sun, moon, and stars which is interesting to this author.

"there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (The Revelation 12:1).

In The Revelation passage, this writer believes the woman represents the church. There are others who believe it represents GOD's obedient people of all time. It should be noted that the "crown" in the above passage is the stephanos, the victory crown. Further note what the Spirit of GOD said later in the chapter.

"the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of GOD, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v. 17).

Are the twelve stars representative of the twelve patriarchs (Jacob's sons)? Do they represent the twelve apostles? Or do they represent all of GOD's people of all time? This writer is not willing to say that The Revelation passage is connected to the present text under study. At this point he simply finds it interesting.

Jacob rebuked (chided) Joseph as he revealed this dream. It was obvious to Jacob that the stars represented his family. But after chiding Joseph, the Bible says Jacob "observed the saying."

"observe" — shamar — *"to keep, guard, observe, give heed...to keep, retain, treasure up (in memory)"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

The idea seems to be that he kept them and pondered their meaning. Why would he do this? Because he had experienced similar dreams himself in which GOD had revealed things to him.

"Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart...And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them:

but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke 2:19, 51).

Gen. 37:12-17 "And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan."

> "And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Are not thy brethren feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go now, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flock; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I am seeking my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding the flock. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan." (ASV)

Why would Jacob send Joseph to his brothers when they hated him and could not speak peaceably with him? Apparently no threat of physical harm had been made by the brothers, thus no great concern for his safety. When Jacob asked Joseph to go check on his brothers and the flock, Joseph was ready and willing to obey his father's wishes.

The brothers had taken the sheep to Shechem, the infamous city where Dinah had been raped and her brothers had slaughtered the inhabitants. This would at first glance seem to be an odd place to go. But it should be recalled that Jacob owned land here, and the fear of them was upon the people. It is estimated that Shechem was about a two day journey from the vale of Hebron from which Joseph came. Upon arriving at Shechem, it was discovered that his brothers and the flock were not there. Upon further investigation, he was told by a stranger that they had been overheard making plans to go to Dothan (about fifteen miles north of

Shechem). The name "Dothan" is believed to mean *"two cisterns"* (Morris).

"The irony is that he was safer with this stranger than with his own brothers" (Grasham, p. 349).

Is there a type here? Joseph was sent to his own brothers by his father, but they refused to accept him and plotted to kill him. Jesus' Father sent Him to His own, and they refused Him and plotted for His death.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11).

Gen. 37:18-24 "And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it."

> "And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, And evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him: that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it." (ASV)

How did they know this person they saw coming from "afar off" was their half-brother Joseph? The obvious answer is by his tunic of many colors. As Joseph approached them, they conspired to murder him.

"conspired" — nakal – *"A verb meaning to be deceitful, to cheat. It indicates a conscious plan*

to deceive someone, to plan something against, to intend to trick or deal cunningly with" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 733).

They referred to Joseph as this "dreamer." There appear to be two original words associated with our English word "dreamer."

baal — *"The main idea is 'owner.' Hence, master, lord, possessor, husband, citizen, burgess, inhabitant, and Baal (a Canaanite god)"* (Zodhiates).

Halomat — *"A masculine noun referring to a dream. It refers to the sensations or images passing through one's mind during sleep, usually during the night...the phrase baal halomat means 'a lord of dreams'"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 340).

"Master of dreams" (Poole, p. 84).

It may be that they were saying this sarcastically. It should be considered that they had already interpreted his dreams as applying to themselves and their parents, and they resented this. They could not see themselves bowing down to their younger brother as their ruler. It is almost as if their thinking was, *"Let's see his dreams come true after we murder him."*

Their plan was simple. Kill him, cast his body away, and tell Jacob he had been killed by an animal. But Reuben did not go along with this plan and urged them not to commit fratricide. He convinced them to cast Joseph into a pit, planning later to save him and return him to Jacob. He delivered Joseph from immediately being put to death. Why did Reuben do this? Was it because he knew how terrible a crime this would be (Cain and Abel)? Was he trying to ingratiate himself to Jacob against whom he had sinned by taking Bilhah?

All of this took place while Joseph was afar off. By the time he arrived among them, their plan was set. They stripped Joseph's coat off and cast him into a nearby empty "pit."

"pit" — bor — *"a pit hole (especially one used as a cistern or prison"* (Strong); *"pit, well, cistern"* (BDB).

"A pit was a cistern that held water during the rainy season but went dry toward the end of the summer" (Willis, quoted by Coffman, p. 453).

"Such cisterns were usually lined with stones and plaster to make them water-tight, and they

were virtually escape-proof unless someone lowered a rope to the unfortunate person who had fallen or been imprisoned below" (Grasham, p. 351).

Gen. 37:25-28 "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt."

> "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him. And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt." (ASV)

Note the callousness of these brothers. They stripped Joseph of his special coat and threw him into a cistern. They debated the idea of either killing him or leaving him to die in this cistern. They sat down and began consuming a common meal. All the while Joseph was no doubt pleading with them for his life.

> "they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Genesis 42:21).

Consider that Reuben had stepped in when his brothers had determined to kill Joseph. He had convinced them to put Joseph in the cistern rather than kill him with their own hands. Then he went somewhere, probably to take care of some task. While he was gone, the brothers casually sat down for a common meal. Judah now took his turn to try to save Joseph's life.

The brothers saw a company of traders from Gilead

loaded with spices which they were carrying to Egypt.

"Gilead" — *"hill of testimony, (Gen. 31:21), a mountainous region east of Jordan. From its mountainous character it is called "the mount of Gilead" (Gen. 31:25). It is called also "the land of Gilead" (Num. 32:1), and sometimes simply "Gilead" (Ps. 60:7; Gen. 37:25). It comprised the possessions of the tribes of Gad and Reuben and the south part of Manasseh (Deut. 3:13; Num. 32:40). It was bounded on the north by Bashan, and on the south by Moab and Ammon (Gen. 31:21; Deut. 3:12-17). "Half Gilead" was possessed by Sihon, and the other half, separated from it by the river Jabbok, by Og, king of Bashan. The deep ravine of the river Hieromax (the modern Sheriat el-Mandhur) separated Bashan from Gilead, which was about 60 miles in length and 20 in breadth, extending from near the south end of the Lake of Gennesaret to the north end of the Dead Sea. Abarim, Pisgah, Nebo, and Peor are its mountains mentioned in Scripture"* (Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary).

These traders were called Ishmaelites, descendants of Ishmael. Further, they are called Medianites (v. 28), descendants of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2). It appears that this was a mixed group of descendants of Abraham. This is when Judah made his appeal to save Joseph's life. He suggested selling Joseph to them. Consider, that if they killed Joseph, his blood would be on their hands. If they left him in the cistern, by chance someone might find him and release him. If that happened, he would have been able to return to his father and report what they had done to him. By selling Joseph to these Ishmaelites, they could be assured that he probably would be sold as a slave in Egypt. They would never have to put up with his dreams of dominance over them again.

"Although most slaves were the booty of military conquest, private and commercial slave-trading was also common" (MacArthur, p. 65).

They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Josephus in his *"Antiquities"* states that the common slave was sold for thirty pieces of silver in Egypt. This would give the Ishmaelites a profit of ten pieces of silver (JFB, p. 233). One should consider the actions of GOD in this whole affair. It was GOD who sent the dreams to Joseph – GOD had a plan for Joseph which would eventually create a nation through which His Son would come. Due to Jacob's favoritism, Joseph's brothers

hated him and decided to put him to death. How did GOD save Joseph to accomplish his plans? GOD did not miraculously save him. Instead, a band of Ishmaelites came on the scene, and Joseph was sold into slavery. The nation would be established in Egypt, in the district of Goshen, because Joseph became the second ruler in Egypt, where his brothers would one day bow before him.

Gen. 37:29-30 "And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?"

> "And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" (ASV)

Wherever Reuben had been, he returned and found the pit empty (Cozort suggests it was Reuben's turn to watch the flock, p. 185). The first recorded thing he did was "rent" (*"tore"* — NKJV) his clothes. Tearing one's clothes was a sign of intense mourning. The younger brother he had intended to save was gone, and he immediately assumed that Joseph was dead or, at the least, taken by someone. One should note that the phrase "is not" is employed in other passages to signify the death of someone.

> "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not" (Genesis 42:13).

The term is also used to show that one is missing. Remember, that Jacob firmly believed Joseph was dead, but he also knew that Simeon was not with his brothers but rather in prison in Egypt.

> "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36).

Reuben "returned unto his brethren." From this phrase, it appears that, after casting their brother into the pit and selling him, the brothers had moved on toward another location.

"where shall I go" What a hopeless cry this appears to be, which also shows he was not as hard-hearted as his brothers. Why would such a hopeless cry have come from Reuben at this time? It must deal with the fact that he was the oldest and would therefore be held accountable. When looking ahead, one sees Reuben acting as the guarantee that his youngest brother would

be returned to Jacob in safety.

> "And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again" (Genesis 42:37).

This brings up the idea of the "goel."

> *"By the law of Goelism, the eldest was constituted protector of his younger brother...his excessive grief arose from a sense of his personal responsibility"* (JFB, p. 233).

> *"Goel in Hebrew the participle of the verb _gaal_, 'to redeem.' It is rendered in the Authorized Version 'kinsman,' Num. 5:8; Ruth 3:12; 4:1,6,8; 'redeemer,' Job 19:25; 'avenger,' Num. 35:12; Deut. 19:6, etc. The Jewish law gave the right of redeeming and repurchasing, as well as of avenging blood, to the next relative, who was accordingly called by this name"* (Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary).

Gen. 37:31-34 "And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days."

> "And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a he-goat, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said, This have we found: know now whether it is thy son's coat or not. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat: an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces. And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." (ASV)

The cover-up began. It appears that they did not want to tell Jacob a direct lie. Let their father declare that Joseph was dead. Jacob declared that a wild beast had torn his son apart. A closer examination, if that were the case, would have revealed bits of flesh on such a garment. Alas, such was not made, for Jacob assumed and went into immediate mourning. It is observed that Reuben, who had wanted to spare Joseph, did not speak up and tell his father what his brothers had done to Joseph. He went along with the deception, probably to avoid blame and the wrath of his father. Jacob had lied to his father. Now his sons lied

to him, and both incidents involved the birthright.

As a sign of his mourning, he tore his garment and put on sackcloth.

> *"A rent is made in the skirt more or less long according to the afflicted feelings of the mourner, and a course rough piece of black sackcloth or camel's hair is wound around the waist"* (JFB, p. 233).

> Sackcloth – *"cloth made of black goats' hair, coarse, rough, and thick, used for sacks, and also worn by mourners"* (Easton).

Note also that they "sent" the coat to their father and they "brought" the coat to their father. For one to commission something to be done by another is the same as that person's having done that thing.

Gen. 37:35 "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

> "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning. And his father wept for him." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in this passage is the term "daughters." Before this time, one could only believe that Jacob had only one daughter — Dinah. This text may reveal that he had at least one other daughter. One should caution himself to remember that the word "daughters" could also refer to *"daughters-in-law,"* as used by the Hebrews.

Note that all of Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort him in the great loss he had sustained. They knew that Joseph was his favorite son, yet they strove to comfort him in his grief. What hypocrisy — those who caused him to grieve because of their lie now tried to comfort him.

> "comforted" — nacham — *"to draw breath forcibly, pant, breathe strongly; to groan; to be sorry; to pity; to grieve; to repent; to take revenge or vengeance; to have compassion, console; to comfort oneself, be comforted. The idea of breathing deeply was a physical display of one's feeling, usually sorrow, compassion, or comfort. Essentially, naMcham is a change of heart or disposition, a change of mind, a change of purpose, or a change of one's conduct"* (Zodhiates).

It is also noted that Jacob said he would go to his death mourning for Joseph.

> "grave" — sheol sheol — *"depth, abyss, the netherworld, the realm of dead people, the world of the dead...the grave, the pit; Hades; hell. The kjv translates shE'oMl as 'grave' thirty–one times, 'hell' thirty times, and 'pit' three times"* (Zodhiates).

Believing a lie brought the same results as if Joseph had actually been killed by a beast of the field — Jacob "refused to be comforted." Jacob went into extreme mourning. At the same time, it is observed that he believed he would see Joseph again — "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." David used similar language to speak of his dead son by Bathsheba.

> "now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23).

There is no doubt that they believed in life after death. They understood that death in this world is not the end of one's existence.

Gen. 37:36 "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard."

> "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard." (ASV)

Jacob was mourning while Joseph was being sold into Egyptian slavery. He was sold to a man named "Potiphar" — *"he whom Ra gave"* (Coffman; BDB). Potiphar is a high-ranking official in the court of Pharaoh.

> "Officer" — saris — *"this masc. noun stems from an unused root which meant to castrate. Therefore, the noun means a eunuch, a valet, a courtier, a minister, a chamberlain, an officer... Not every minister of the court was castrated"* (Zodhiates).

It would seem that Potiphar was one of those not castrated, because he had a wife. One is also told that he was a "captain of the guard."

> "guard" — tabbach — *"properly a butcher; hence a lifeguardsman (because acting as executioner); also a cook (as usually slaughtering the animal for food)"* (Strong); *"executioner, cook, bodyguard, guardsman"* (BDB).

Genesis Chapter Thirty-eight

Gen. 38:1 "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah."

> "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah." (ASV)

The time frame indicated by "it came to pass" refers to the time when Joseph was a captive in Egypt. It is not known how long after the brothers' deception that this event took place. (Clarke believes these events took place before the selling of Joseph. This writer discounts this because of the role Judah played regarding his brother.) Leupold probably has about the right time frame, saying these events in Judah's life probably happened within a couple of years before Jacob and his family moved to Egypt. He based these thoughts on the ages of these sons and the fact that it was twenty-two years between the selling of Joseph and their moving to Egypt (p. 977).

The phrase "down from his brethren" indicates that Judah moved away from his brothers. Some have speculated that he had to get away from his grieving father because he knew his guilt. Others speculate that he just wanted to be alone for a while. Although one cannot know why he separated himself, one can be assured that it was not too far away, because when his brothers went to Egypt for food, he went with them.

"Turned in" to Hirah, who was an Adullamite (a man from Adullam).

> "turned in" — natah — *"to stretch out, extend, spread out, pitch, turn, pervert, incline, bend, bow"* (BDB).

It would seem that a friendship developed between these men, as they lived together in the land. MacArthur states that *"Adullam was a town about one mile northwest of Hebron"* (p. 65). Leupold believes it was *"likely in the foothills, the Shephelah"* (p. 978),

Gen. 38:2 "And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her."

> "And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. And he took her, and went in unto her." (ASV)

Two things stand out in this passage. Shuah's daughter was a Canaanite (v. 12), and Judah married

her. It should be remembered that Jacob had been charged by Isaac not to marry a Canaanite. This seems to point out that at a very early stage, the rule of not marrying outside the family had been established (although this is not certain). Later it will be part of the law of Moses.

> *"It is stated in the previous verse that Judah 'went down;' and it is clear that he not only descended to a lower level, geographically, but that he also descended to a lower level spiritually"* (Coffman, p. 459).

One cannot help but wonder why Judah would marry a Canaanite, considering the family history.

Gen. 38:3-5 "And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him."

> "And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. And she yet again bare a son, and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him." (ASV)

Here is the simple telling of the three sons by Judah's Canaanite wife.

Gen. 38:6-7 "And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him."

> "And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah. And Jehovah slew him." (ASV)

The text reminds one that Er was the firstborn and then states that Judah chose a wife for him. The woman's name was Tamar (*"palm tree"* – Leupold, p. 979) . There does not seem to be any proof that she was or was not a Canaanite. It is this writer's **opinion** that she was probably from the lineage of Abraham, since she is found in the lineage of Jesus (Matthew 1:3).

Why did GOD take Er's life? He was "wicked in the sight of the Lord."

"wicked" — ra raah — *"The essential meaning of ra' is the inability to come up to good standards. It is the opposite of tRoMv, good. God exhorted His people to turn away from ra' (Deut. 13:11;*

2 Kgs. 17:13; 2 Chr. 7:14; Ezek. 33:11; 36:31; Zech. 1:4). It is unethical, immoral activity against other people, whether by speech, by practice, or by offering improper sacrifices. This depicts a very negative attitude toward God or man" (Zodhiates); *"bad, evil...worse than worst"* (Brown/Driver/Briggs).

The text does not tell what Er's sin was. Maybe he had become as wicked as the people in Noah's time, whose every thought was continuously evil (Genesis 6:5). Whatever it was, GOD considered him so evil that he could not live on the face of the earth any longer. The Bible clearly teaches that GOD has killed people because of their wickedness.

"NT examples of this are in Acts 5:1-11; Acts 12:23 and in Revelation 2:22. Such summary judgments of God never fell upon anyone capriciously, or without due cause; and in all the recorded instances of it, some very grave danger to the covenant people was thus averted" (Coffman, p. 460).

GOD's word teaches that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and since all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), everyone deserves to die when he sins. But GOD's mercy allows all to live beyond that point. Therefore, it must be an extremely grievous sin in the eyes of GOD for Him to take one's life.

"Possibly, God saw no redeeming quality in his life, and his heart was so hardened in sin that he had passed the point of possible repentance" (Grasham, Vol. 2, p. 365).

Gen. 38:8-10 "And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also."

"And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and he slew him also." (ASV)

The law of Moses called for a younger brother of one who died without having children to marry his wife

and bear children (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). This was done to give his brother that had died children who would carry on the name and inheritance. The firstborn would then be considered his brother's child, and any born to this marriage after that would belong to the second husband. Apparently at the time of this incident (the law of Moses not being in effect at this time), the custom of the levirate marriage was being practiced.

Judah commanded his second oldest son (Onan) to take Tamar as his wife and raise up a son to his brother. Onan appears to be as rebellious as his brother Er. He took Tamar as his wife, but refused to inseminate her. It should be noted that GOD did not punish Onan with death because of the way he did this. He was punished because of his rebellion, apparently, to a decree of GOD in this matter. The KJV reading seems to indicate that this was a one-time event, but the original seems to indicate a continuous action of disobedience.

> *"The verbs in the second and third clauses of verse 9 are frequentive and should be translated, 'whenever he went'"* (Simpson, as quoted by Coffman, p. 462).

Gen. 38:11 "Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house."

> "Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown up; for he said, Lest he also die, like his brethren. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house." (ASV)

Two of Judah's sons were executed by GOD because of their rebellion. But Judah apparently did not understand that. He had a third son which was not old enough yet to be married. So he told Tamar to remain a widow until he was old enough to marry her. It would seem from future events that Judah had no intention of giving Shelah to her (see verse 14). Judah seems to think their deaths were somehow Tamar's fault. Tamar obediently went back to her father's house and waited for Judah to fulfill his promise.

Gen. 38:12-14 "And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to

shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife."

> "And in process of time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnah to shear his sheep. And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife." (ASV)

"And in process of time" (*"and the days were multiplied"* JFB, p. 235; *"the days grew many"* Barnes, 982). From the context both before and after this passage, it is clear that a large amount of time has elapsed. Judah had promised his youngest son to Tamar when he was old enough. Verse fourteen shows that Shelah was grown, yet Judah did not give him to her. During this time frame, it is also declared that Judah's wife died, probably not many days before this incident.

Tamar was told that Judah and his friend Hirah were going to the sheep shearing at Timnath. It was now evident that Judah did not intend to give Shelah to her as a husband. What would she do? She disguised herself as temple prostitute and waited along the way for Judah.

> *"While this type of relationship (a daughter-in-law with her father-in-law) is shocking to modern readers, it was in keeping with levirate law in the ancient Near East. The duty applied first to the remaining brothers of the deceased man, 'from the oldest son to the youngest son' or whomever the father-in-law chose. However, if all of these options were unavailable, the responsibility fell to other family members, including the father-in-law. Under normal circumstances, however, such a relationship was taboo. In fact, the law of Moses judged sexual relations between a man and his daughter-in-law to be a capital offense (Lev. 10:12)"* (Grasham, p. 370).

Leverite marriages were codified by GOD in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

Gen. 38:15-18 "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And

he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him."

> "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee: for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet and thy cord, and thy staff that is in thy hand. And he gave them to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him." (ASV)

Why did Judah think Tamar was a prostitute? Because of the way she was dressed. In particular, because she was wearing a veil. How people dress says something about them! Many today seem to think it does not matter how they dress, in or out of a worship setting. That is not what the Bible teaches.

Did Tamar sin in this matter? Careful analysis leads this writer to wonder, for Judah declared "she hath been more righteous than I" (v. 26). Why did Judah say this? She kept the levirite law, whereas he attempted to by-pass it (see notes by Grisham above).

The price Judah offered to pay for her services was a young goat. Since Judah did not have such with him, she took a pledge from him. This was a common practice as a guarantee that a debt would be paid, much like a contract agreeing to pay a debt today. The pledge given her was a collection of personal items, which later would be used to identify him as the father of her twins.

A signet was an engraved image or symbol made in metal or stone which identified an individual. The ancient signets found were of two varieties: a ring engraved on the top or a cylinder, which was hung from a cord around the neck.

Gen. 38:19-23 "And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the

woman's hand: but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place. And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her."

> "And she arose, and went away, and put off her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not. Then he asked the men of her place, saying, Where is the prostitute, that was at Enaim by the wayside? And they said, There hath been no prostitute here. And he returned to Judah, and said, I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, There hath been no prostitute here. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be put to shame: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her." (ASV)

After deceiving Judah into believing she was a prostitute, Tamar went home and changed back into the clothing of a widow. At the time she was doing this, Judah sent his friend with the goat he had promised the woman he believed to have been a prostitute. When his friend reached the place where she had been, there was no one there. Maybe he got the directions wrong, so he asked the men of the area where this woman was. Note the word used to describe her — "harlot" [*"prostitute"* (ASV)].

> "harlot" — qedeshah — *"It means harlot, whore, temple prostitute. Prostitution received official sanction from the Canaanite religion which made reproductivity part of its summum bonum (the highest or chief good). There were seasons of sexual orgy associated with Astarte."* (Zodhiates).

They told him there had been no prostitute in this area.

Upon returning to Judah, he reported that she was not found. Whereupon Judah decided to let her have the items she had taken in pledge. Note his reasoning for making this decision — "lest we be shamed." Judah knew he had done wrong. To make further inquiry as to the whereabouts of this woman would have caused all to know what he had done and would have caused him to be shamed (buz — *"contempt, laughingstock"* - Zodhiates). He should have felt shame long before the incident recorded with the "harlot."

Something else to consider here. Tamar's actions were a one-time event. How did she know she would become pregnant, or was she only hopeful she would

become such? Did she reason that if she did not become pregnant, she still had Judah's pledge with which she could confront him? Why did she do this in the first place? Did she believe that Judah would leave her as a widow for the rest of her life? One of the things to be considered here is that Tamar is listed in the lineage of Jesus (Matthew 1:3). Judah had married outside of the lineage, and his first two sons and wife died early. No doubt the third son was probably as wicked as the first two. GOD chose to continue the lineage of Messiah through the less righteous (Judah) and the more righteous (Tamar – see verse 26 where more will be said about this.).

Gen. 38:24-26 "And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more."

> "And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot; and moreover, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She is more righteous than I; forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more." (ASV)

It was discovered three months later that Tamar was pregnant. The natural assumption would be that she had been unfaithful to Shelah to whom she was pledged (betrothed). Therefore, Judah commanded that she be brought forth to be burned. This brings forth a problem. Was she literally to be burned to death, or was this some sort of mark to condemn her actions? What about the innocent children she carried? Remember that GOD chose Judah to be the one through whom Messiah would come.

> *"The Mosaic law fixed the penalty of burning only for the case of a priest's daughter who had become guilty of harlotry (cf. Deuteronomy 22:20-24 with Leviticus 21:9). The usual mode*

of execution for other cases was stoning" (Barnes, p. 987).

Tamar sent the items which Judah had given her as a pledge and asked Judah to identify them. Judah knew very well that these items were his and stepped up to the plate, declaring them to be his own. He acknowledged them as his own and made this statement: "She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son." Was this speaking of the actions of two righteous people? Or is Judah saying she was more right than he was? Both of their actions were wrong; they both sinned in this matter.

Note the last phrase in verse twenty-six. "he knew her again no more," i.e., he only had sexual relations with her that one time and then never again. This seems to point to the fact that he could not take her as wife, even though the twins born to her were his sons. (They should have been his grandsons if he had followed the levirate law.).

Gen. 38:27-30 "And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah."

> "And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one put out a hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, Wherefore hast thou made a breach for thyself? Therefore his name was called Perez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zerah." (ASV)

The time came for Tamar to give birth. Interestingly, from this passage, the midwife apparently understood that she was having twins, for she tied a string around the hand of one and declared, "This came out first." But then the hand was withdrawn, and instead his brother came out first. Therefore he was named "Pharez" (*"breach"*). Then came "Zarah" (*"rising"*), who had the scarlet string tied to him. The importance of this chapter is seen when one looks ahead. If this incident

had not happened, the lineage to the Messiah would have been broken. But GOD seemingly voided that outcome through the birth of these twins, with Pharez becoming the link to the Messiah.

Genesis Chapter Thirty-nine

Gen. 39:1-6 "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured."

> "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found favor in his sight, and he ministered unto him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught that was with him, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was comely, and well-favored." (ASV)

After the account of Judah and Tamar, the Bible now returns to the history of Joseph and how GOD's providence saved Israel through him.

Morris believes the events recorded here were during the time of the Hyksos kings (Shepherd Kings).

They had invaded and conquered Egypt from the East. In this account, Potiphar [*"he whom Ra (the sun god) has given"* – Grasham, p. 383] is singled out as being an Egyptian in verses 1, 2, and 5. It would seem that a distinction is being made by GOD which may indicate that his overlords were not Egyptians. This might also be an indicator of what is meant later when a Pharaoh came to power who knew not Joseph (Exodus 1:8). In the later case, if that Pharaoh were an Egyptian, he probably would not have chosen to recognize someone who had come from the East no matter how much good he had done in saving Egypt from a great drought.

The text states that Potiphar was an "officer" of Pharaoh.

> "officer" — saris — *"this masc. noun stems from an unused root which meant to castrate. Therefore, the noun means a eunuch, a valet, a courtier, a minister, a chamberlain, an officer. Eastern kings were accustomed to putting castrated males over the care of their royal women and over other offices of the court (Esth. 1:10, 12, 15; 2:3, 14, 15; 4:5 [cf. Is. 56:3, 4; Dan. 1:3]). Not every minister of the court was castrated. Potiphar was a sRaMri2sR but he had a wife (Gen. 37:36; 39:1; 40:2, 7). The term sometimes means a military leader (2 Kgs. 25:19). Whatever their function happened to be, they were renowned for their faithfulness to their masters"* (Zodhiates).

Potaphar is also designated as a captain of the guard.

> "captain" — sar — "The meaning is a head, a person (of any rank or class), a captain, a master, a chief, a ruler (over cattle, Gen. 47:6), a commander, a prefect, a leader, a nobleman, a courtier (Gen. 12:15), a prince (Ex. 2:14; Is. 23:8), a steward; (poetically) priests (Is. 43:28), the Messiah (Dan. 8:25), archangels (Dan. 10:13, 20)" (Zodiates).

This possibly indicates that he was the leader of the elite bodyguard. It may have referred to the head of the prison into which Joseph was later placed. Regarding the Pharaoh under which Potiphar was an officer, Cook believed he was Sesostris II (1897 - 1879 B.C.; p. 90).

Verse one also reveals that it was the Ishmeelites who sold Joseph to Potiphar. One is reminded that the terms "Midianites" and "Ishmeelites" refer to two groups who lived in the same vicinity and often traded together. These terms were sometimes used interchangeably, as seen in Genesis 37:28.

What made Joseph favorable in the sight of GOD?

Obviously, it was his great faith in GOD and willingness to accept the circumstances in which he found himself and serve those around him as if he were serving the GOD of Heaven — which he was! One of the interesting things found in verse two is the fact that Joseph was a "prosperous man." The word "prosperous" (saleah) is *"a verb meaning to prosper, to succeed, to be victorious"* (Zodhiates, p. 951). Thus the NKJV translates this word as *"successful."* It would seem to this writer that it may refer more to the idea that Joseph was victorious over the unfavorable circumstances in which he found himself. He was a faithful servant of GOD, therefore GOD favored him with success in all that he did. This did not mean that Joseph was without faults. Like Moses, he seemed to have had a sense of pride and self-worth, and like Moses, needed to be humbled in order to walk the path GOD chose for him. (Moses needed forty years in the wilderness, and Joseph needed to be a slave, an honored slave, and cast into prison.)

After a time, Joseph was promoted in the house of Potiphar and became the "overseer" of all that Potiphar owned. The word "overseer" (paqadh) has a number of meanings, but here it obviously refers to one who is in charge of something. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that the Septuagint uses the word episkopos (overseer or bishop) in this text.

> "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers**, to feed the church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28, emphasis mine, RK).

It should be considered that this did not happen overnight, as the revealed text might seem to imply, but it took some time before Potiphar placed him in this position. Enough time went by that Joseph's brothers did not have a clue as to his identity when they came before him. The result was the same as seen with Israel and Laban, who was blessed because of the favor shown to Israel by GOD. Potiphar came to trust Joseph so much that he did not know how prosperous he was ("he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat").

Verse six ends with an observation about Joseph, "Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured," *"Joseph was comely, and well-favored"* (ASV); "*Joseph was handsome in form and appearance"* (NKJV); *"Joseph is of a fair form, and of a fair appearance"* (YLT). In other words, Joseph was easy to look at, a handsome man. The original words used here refer to

the outward appearance of things. Unlike so many who appear beautiful on the outside but are base and ugly on the inside, Joseph was beautiful in form and appearance.

The overriding subject in all of this is that GOD is given the credit for blessing Joseph and Potiphar. GOD is in control, and GOD favors His faithful servants. This may not always mean physical prosperity. Contentment and hope are often the signs of a GOD-blessed and GOD-possessed man.

Gen. 39:7-10 "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her."

> "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath put all that he hath into my hand: he is not greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." (ASV)

"it came to pass after these things" After Joseph had been placed in a position of trust and power in Potiphar's house. If one goes back to verse two, he notices something that is easily overlooked. There are three "and's" in the verse. The first applies to the relationship of GOD and Joseph — "with him." The second applies to what GOD made Joseph, successful and victorious – "prosperous man." The third applies to where Joseph abode — "he was in the house of his master." Joseph lived in his master's house as a part of his family. It was in this time frame that Mrs. Potiphar began brazenly to consider Joseph as a partner in adultery — "Lie with me."

"Lie" — sakab — *"A verb meaning to lie down, to sleep. It means to put oneself in a reclining position when sleeping or resting...It is used of sexual intercourse, lying with a woman or man"* (Zodhiates, p. 1134).

"Keil and others have pointed out that Egyptian women were noted for their lascivious and unfaithful ways" (Barnes, p. 997).

What was Joseph's reaction to Mrs. Potiphar's advances? He "refused" them. Jameson/Fausset/Brown quote an unnamed poet as writing, *"A shameless woman is the worst of men"* (p. 238). GOD's law has always been one woman for one man.

> "And the LORD GOD said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him...And the rib, which the LORD GOD had taken from man, made he **a** woman, and **brought her** unto the man...Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall **cleave unto his wife**: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:18, 22, 24, emphasis mine, RK).

When the Pharisees tempted Jesus by asking why Moses had permitted marriage, divorce, and remarriage, Jesus said, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but **from the beginning it was not so**" (Matthew 19:8, emphasis mine, RK). Marriage was never to be a loose affair which could be toyed with and broken whenever someone was tired of his mate or wanted a new experience. Marriage is to be honored, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled.

> "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

Why did Joseph refuse Mrs. Potiphar's advances? He could have reasoned, No one will know if I accept her invitation ("Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house"). He could have said "Such *'affairs'* happen all the time, and no one seems to care." If Potiphar were a eunuch Joseph could have stated that he was simply satisfying her needs, or one of hundreds of other excuses used to do what GOD said should not be done. But Joseph did not give in to her demands; he did not rely upon any contrived excuse. Instead, he simply let it be known that if he committed adultery with Mrs. Potiphar, he would be sinning against GOD. If men and women would consider GOD in all their decisions, before they acted, it would solve most of the world's problems. What man needs to understand is that when he does wrong (sins) to his fellow man, he is sinning against GOD. This lesson cannot be over emphasized **All sin is against GOD!**

"If one is to fulfill God's plan, he cannot sin against the God who will bring it about"

(MacArthur, p. 90).

Clarke rightly states that Joseph's decision was based upon two thoughts: *"Gratitude to his master"* and *"His fear of God"* (p. 229).

"she spake to Joseph day by day" What a terrible situation this was for Joseph. This woman was obsessed with him and was determined that she was going to get him to sin with her. Further, what a temptation he daily faced to give in to her demands and get her to leave him alone. How could Joseph handle this without making her a scorned woman or sinning against his GOD? (*"Hell hath no fury like a scorned woman."*) First, he continued to tell her no in no uncertain terms. Second, he avoided her. This is exactly what he did; "he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." Remember that he lived in the house and he administered all the affairs of Potiphar, therefore he would have to be there from time to time. But even if he had managed to never go into the house, the context shows she would have made opportunities to approach him.

Let one consider a thought put forth by Zerr just here.

> *"It is often claimed today that certain temptations are so great that even God would not expect one to resist. Men will contend that when the surroundings are of a certain combination it is impossible to resist. But how could a situation ever arise with more 'irresistible' features than this one before Joseph"* (Vol. 1, p. 87)?

Consider also the words of Bowie as quoted by Coffman.

> *"A decent man can be shocked by the bold suddenness of evil, and his conscience may recoil; but when the shock wears off, the suggestion seems not so strange. Then comes a new danger. Just as a steel bridge can resist a heavy blow may be endangered by the successive shocks that come from the feet of marching men, a man's moral resistance may disintegrate beneath the impact of temptation that comes relentlessly on and on"* (p. 473).

Further, consider a thought here with regard to our Lord which would seem unpleasant to some.

> "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Gen. 39:11-19 "And it came to pass about this time, that

Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled."

> "And it came to pass about this time, that he went into the house to do his work; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his master came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, whom thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in this text is that Joseph did not go into the house for any purpose other than to do "his business." He knew Potiphar's wife had designs to induce him to sin. Joseph was not trying to see how close he could come to sin without sinning — he was not purposely placing himself in the way of temptation. It would be this writer's belief that he probably avoided the house and Mrs. Potiphar as much as possible, while still honoring the position in which Potiphar had placed him.

The second thought considered is the aggressiveness which Potiphar's wife exhibited. Those practicing sin are often aggressive, especially toward those who will not join them in such. Further, the text shows how they react when they are totally rebuffed.

Scorned — *"to treat with scorn: reject or dismiss as contemptible or unworthy"* (Webster).

Her "love" or desire turned to hatred and a desire for vengeance on the one who denied her.

When Mrs. Potiphar tried to force herself upon Joseph, he fled from her. How aggressive was she? It appears that she tried to strip. Joseph fled without his garment. What was she going to do? How could she explain the garment in her hand? How could Joseph explain his nakedness outside the house? She could be accused of adultery if his garment were found in her possession. She "called" the men of the house.

"called" — qara — *"to cry out, call aloud, roar; to proclaim, pronounce, preach"* (Zodhiates).

When the men came to her "aid," she accused Joseph of trying to rape her. But it was not Joseph who attempted to force himself upon her, but rather she was guilty of the crime she attributed to him. The garment was used by her as circumstantial evidence of Joseph's guilt. But note — it was false evidence. Circumstantial evidence does not always mean that a crime has been committed. Appearances may deceive, as is often seen when magicians cause people to believe something has happened when it did not. It should also be noted that she in part lays the blame for this "incident" on her husband. Here is an example of blaming everyone else instead of putting the blame where it really exists. It is no different from what is seen in the garden by Adam and Eve.

When Potiphar came home, his wife made the same accusation against Joseph as she had before the men of the house. Potiphar's "wrath was kindled."

"wrath" — aph — *" refers to the breathing part of the body specifically the nose, nostril, or face... By the act of breathing, emotions can be expressed. In anger the nose dilates and breathing becomes more intense"* (Zodhiates).

"kindled" — charah — *"this root means to burn, be kindled, glow with anger, be incensed, grow indignant; to be zealous, act zealously. Unlike some of its synonyms, charah points to the fire or heat of the anger just after it has been ignited"* (Zodhiates).

Upon whom was Potipar's wrath kindled? At first

glance, it would be assumed that it was against Joseph, since he was imprisoned. But the text does not say. His wrath could just as easily have been kindled against his wife or against the fact that he was losing a very valuable servant. What is interesting is the next section of study, where it is revealed where Joseph was placed. Remember that Joseph could just as easily have been executed on the spot with no questions asked.

> *"'Where there's smoke, there's bound to be fire!' Well, here, there is a lot of smoke, and no fire at all"* (Coffman, p. 475).

It is this writer's belief that Potiphar knew the charges against Joseph were false.

Regarding Joseph's fleeing, Unger had these clear thoughts.

> *"Sometimes the only way to avoid sin is to flee from the temptation. This is not cowardice but realistic acknowledgment of the power of sin, and also of one's need of God's help in time of trial and temptation"* (Unger, p. 89).

Gen. 39:20-21 "And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison."

> "And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." (ASV)

Potiphar, without any proof to the contrary, had to accept the testimony of his wife over a servant.

The first thing of note in these verses is where Joseph was confined. Care was taken by the Spirit to point out that this was where the "king's prisoners" were kept. This does not appear to be a common prison. That does not mean that life here was any easier than common prisons. Consider what Psalm 105:18 says about Joseph's imprisonment.

> "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron."

The second thing of note here is the phrase "the LORD was with Joseph." Remember that Potiphar could simply have had Joseph executed for attempting to rape his wife. Did Potiphar have suspicions that his wife was lying? Four times this chapter states that "the LORD was with Joseph" (vv. 2, 3, 21, 23). Obviously, this indicates that Joseph was faithful to GOD during all of this time and through all of these proceedings. The

situation one finds himself in does not matter — he can still be faithful to GOD and be blessed by GOD. Because he was faithful, GOD showed him mercy.

> "who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord GOD in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:13-15).

Further, GOD caused the keeper of the prison to show "favor" to Joseph.

> "favor" — chen — *"It means favor, kindness, grace, loveliness, charm, preciousness...Most of the occurrences are secular and not theological in importance...It is often found in a superior–inferior relationship"* (Zodhiates).

Joseph continued to do what was right in GOD's sight. When the keeper of the prison saw the outstanding character of Joseph, and that everything he did caused things to work the way they should, he did the same thing Potiphar had done — he placed everything under Joseph's control and did not worry about his abusing his authority or causing the keeper harm.

> *"One thing seems likely enough, and that is that Potiphar's deputy would not have so drastically alleviated Joseph's punishment without Potiphar's consent"* (Coffman, p. 477, cf. notes on verse one).

Genesis — Chapter Forty

Gen. 40:1-3 "And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward."

> "And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against his two officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he ministered unto them: and they continued a season in ward." (ASV)

One should observe a short time-line here in the life of Joseph.

> "These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (Genesis 37:2).

It would not have been much later than this event until Joseph was sold to the Midianites (possibly less than a year). How long was he a slave and/or prisoner?

> "Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:46).

This leaves thirteen years in between these two recorded events. It is easy to fall into a trap of thinking these events happened one after the other in rapid fire because of the way the Bible was written. It must be remembered as one studies the Bible that GOD did not give every minute detail, but instead furnished man with the essentials he needed to understand His word.

> "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen" (John 21:25).

There are seven characters which are considered here: Joseph, chief butler, chief baker, Pharaoh, captain of the guard, implied the keeper of the prisoners, and GOD.

"chief butler" — *"not only the cup bearer, but overseers of the royal vineyards, as well as the cellars"* (JFB, p. 239). This was an important position, because he would have tasted the king's wine so as to avoid Pharaoh's being poisoned. The same would be true of the baker.

"chief baker" — *"cook, had the superintendence of everything related to the providing and preparing of meats for the royal table"* (IBID). JFB then went on to say that the Egyptians did a lot of baking of meat and different qualities of bread.

"Pharaoh" — All powerful king of Egypt. MacArthur believes this was Senusert II, c. 1894 - 1878 B.C. (p. 67).

"captain of the guard" — This is the same title given to Potiphar (Genesis 39:1). It was he who placed the royal prisoners under the care of Joseph.

The implied keeper of the prisoners would not have

been Potiphar, but rather what would be called a warden today.

The text states that these two officers had "offended" Pharaoh.

"offended" — chata — *"to miss the way, fail; sin; to forfeit; to endanger"* (Zodhiates).

It is not known in which way they endangered him, but considering their positions, it is probable that there had been a plot by someone to poison the king. Until it could be determined who was guilty, the safest thing would be to imprison both of them.

In this prison, Joseph (himself a prisoner), was "charged" (paqadh — *"to care for, look after"* – Zodhiates) with their care. This would seem to indicate that they may have been treated quite well. How long did they continue in this condition? The text says they were there for a "season" — days (yom). It would appear that this was many days or possibly a year or more. It would also indicate that their imprisonment was to be temporary. Careful observation shows that Joseph preceded them as a prisoner.

Gen. 40:5-8 "And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to GOD? tell me them, I pray you."

> "And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream, in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and saw them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in ward in his master's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sad to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to GOD? tell it me, I pray you." (ASV)

Modern readers should remember that GOD often sent messages to people in the Old Testament dispensations.

"GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1).

This was not only true of GOD's people (Joseph), but was also true of those who were not faithful to GOD (Pharaoh and these two prisoners). There was something about these dreams which caused those to whom they were sent to know that they were not simple ordinary dreams, but rather came from GOD. The Bible does not tell how GOD communicated this to people.

> *"Modern day psychologists such as Freud have also devoted much study to dreams that have tended to regard them as reflective of the subconscious desires and frustrations of the individual's own experience"* (Morris, p. 570).

Because GOD sometimes communicated with people through dreams, there were also those who tried to lead His people astray through dreams they claimed were from GOD.

> "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten My name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not My word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal My words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:26-32).

There is no doubt (in this writer's mind) that GOD caused these two men to have these dreams in the same night. GOD's man (Joseph) was on the scene through the providence of GOD, to interpret these dreams. Note carefully that Joseph did not claim to be able to interpret dreams concerning the future based on his own ability or understanding. "Do not interpretations belong to GOD?" Let it be clearly understood that those who claim the ability to interpret dreams today are charlatans. There is a like incident where one of GOD's men was available to tell the future of dreams to

monarchs of the time — Daniel 2:1-45.

> "there is a GOD in Heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these" (Daniel 2:28).

Joseph gave due credit for his interpretations to GOD.

Gen. 40:9-13 "And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. "

> "And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and its blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head, and restore thee unto thine office: and thou shalt give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler." (ASV)

The words of the butler show a dream which it seems was in fast forward mode. The vine and branches grow, bud, produce grapes, and he was serving Pharaoh. Normally this process would take months. What a happy and pleasant dream this must have been, especially after the interpretation was given. The butler was going to be restored to his former position of honor in three days.

Gen. 40:14-15 "But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

> "But have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make

mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." (ASV)

Upon giving the butler good news, Joseph asked a favor of him. He knew that because of his position in Pharaoh's court, he would have ready access to him. Thus, he asked him to tell Pharaoh about him and plead his case before him. Though it is not recorded, one can easily see the butler promising to remember Joseph before Pharaoh. Unfortunately, the butler did not remember his promise for two more years (41:1, 9).

One of the striking things recorded here is that Joseph did not charge those (by name) who had done him wrong. He proclaimed his case simply and directly and said he had done nothing to deserve the treatment he had received.

Gen. 40:16-19 "When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee."

"When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, three baskets of white bread were on my head: and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of baked food for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days; within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee." (ASV)

It seems that the baker waited to tell his dream until after the butler's dream was revealed and that it was good. Why? Was he guilty and knew it? After the butler's good news, did he simply hope he would be restored as well?

The baker was told that the three baskets represented three days, just as the three branches had represented three days. But unlike the butler's, the baker's dream was not good news. The birds came and ate the delicacies in the top basket.

"An Egyptian dictionary of hieroglyphics lists

thirty-eight varieties of cake and fifty-seven kinds of bread" (Grasham, p. 404).

This indicates that he did not protect the fouling of Pharaoh's food from the fowls. Whether it was purposeful or neglectful, this was taboo. Therefore, Pharaoh would in three days "lift up thy head from off thee" (decapitate him) and hang his body on a tree.

"the criminal was beheaded before he was hanged, and then either hanged on hooks, or by the hands" (Clarke, p. 232).

The birds would then strip his body of flesh.

"Since the Egyptians greatly valued the preservation of the body after death, the thought of an impaled, decaying corpse eaten by birds must have been especially detestable" (Willis quoted by Grasham, p. 406).

JFB gives a description of how bread was often baked in those times.

"A common form of oven in houses is a hole, about six inches deep and three or four in diameter, dug in the floor or ground, along the sides of which flat stones are placed, to concentrate the heat produced by a fire of brush wood. The embers being cleaned out, the dough is placed in the hollow all night. By this process the baking is slow, and bread of an excellent quality produced" (p. 240).

Gen. 40:20-23 "And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him."

"And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him." (ASV)

Three days after Joseph interpreted their dreams, the chief butler and chief baker were brought before Pharaoh and the people. The occasion was Pharaoh's birthday. The results of these men's dreams were fulfilled just as Joseph described them. The butler was

restored to his vaulted position, and the baker was executed.

Instead of remembering Joseph, the butler forgot about him. Before one criticizes the butler unjustly, let him consider the situation. It is this writer's belief that the time was not right for Joseph to be brought out of prison, and therefore GOD may have been behind his forgetfulness. If the butler had remembered him, and if Pharaoh had examined his case, and if Pharaoh had acquitted him — what would he be? Simply a free man. But as it worked out (according to GOD's providence), when Joseph was finally freed, he would be placed second in authority to Pharaoh himself. Simply put, freedom would not have placed Joseph where GOD wanted him at this time. It would take a dream which would threaten the life of Egypt to promote him to the position of leadership where Joseph could save Egypt and his family. Instead of labeling the butler as showing great ingratitude, he should be seen as simply a player in GOD's plans for Joseph and the Israelites. GOD's timetable required two more years for Joseph. People today are into instant gratification, and when they do not receive GOD's promises immediately, they think GOD has forgotten them or will not fulfill His promises.

> "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation...beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:3-4, 8).

GOD did not forget the promises He made to Joseph through his dreams, nor will He forget the promises He has made to Christians.

Genesis Chapter Forty-one

Gen. 41:1-8 "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh."

> "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, well-favored and fat-fleshed; and they fed in the reed-grass. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favored and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill-favored and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed a second time: and, behold, seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven ears, thin and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh." (ASV)

"Pharaoh dreamed" A time frame for these dreams is given as two years after the butler was restored to service. It should be considered that Joseph did not know that the butler had forgotten him and the promise made to him. For all he knew the butler had mentioned him, and Pharaoh had dismissed his case from consideration. How alone he must have felt from a human standpoint. Yet, he never gave up his faith, his trust, in GOD. Joseph had learned to be content wherever and in whatever condition he found himself.

> "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:1).

It seems that these dreams were both on the same night, one following the other, after a brief period of wakefulness. The setting of these dreams found Pharaoh standing by a river, which is no doubt the Nile River. The Nile River provided Egypt with its great wealth and abundance of food. It was the source of life which allowed a great civilization to arise along its banks. Every year the Nile would flood, and the silt left behind was very fertile; thus great crops came to feed

the people and to be shipped abroad in trade. The Egyptians, being a people filled with superstition, considered the Nile as a god.

Pharaoh's first dream concerned seven cows which appropriately came up out of the river, and they were what would be expected, well-favored and fat. Then seven more cows came from the river, but these were very different. They were *"skin and bones"* and ill-favored. And then something really strange happened. The lean cattle ate the fat cattle, but they never gained a pound. This dream must have been so vivid and unusual that it awoke Pharaoh. Soon Pharaoh went back to sleep, but had another dream similar to the first. In this dream, seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk. Again, these ears of grain (probably a form of wheat) on one stalk were well-favored and plump. Then seven bad ears appeared on a new stalk which consumed the seven good ears, but grew no fatter. Zerr believes that the seven good ears and seven bad ears grew on one stalk (p. 90). This dream also awoke Pharaoh. It would seem that Pharaoh at some point went back to sleep, but he did not forget his dreams.

> *"Egypt was known as the granary of the ancient world"* (Leupold, p. 1021).

Verse eight states that in the morning, he was troubled because of these dreams.

> "troubled" — paam — *"A verb meaning to stir, to be stirred, to be troubled. It indicates a troubling or agitation bothering people, making them act"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 911).

The action of Pharaoh was to call the magicians and wise men, obviously to find out what these dreams meant.

> "magicians" — chartom — "It occurs eleven times in the OT. It is always in the pl. form. It means scribes, writers of hieroglyphics, Egyptian or Babylonian sages, magicians. They practiced the occult, sorcery, and incantations" (Zodhiates); *"A masucline noun meaning engraver, a writer associated with the occult. These people seem to have had knowledge of astrology or divination and were commonly associated with the magicians of Egypt in Pharaoh's court"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 378).
>
> "wise men" — hakam — *"It means wise, intelligent, prudent, experienced, clever. When used substantively, it is a wise man, a philosopher, a magician"* (Zodhiates); *"wise...This word is used to describe one who is*

skilled or experienced" (Baker/Carpenter, p. 336).

Nobody could be found among his magicians and wise men who could interpret these dreams. They were honest enough to admit their failure. It should be remembered that the Egyptians put great stock in their dreams, believing they could reveal the future if correctly interpreted. These two dreams of Pharaoh indeed predicted the future — if only they could be interpreted. Unlike the king of Babylon hundreds of years later, he did not order the deaths of his magicians and wise men because they could not interpret his dreams.

> *"It is the fate of the wisdom of this world that where it suffices it is compelled to be silent. For it belongs to the government of God to close the lips of the eloquent, and take away the understanding of the aged (Job 12:20)"* (Baumgarten, quoted by Coffman, p. 491).

Gen. 41:9-13 "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged."

> "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, me and the chief baker: and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged." (ASV)

"I do remember my faults this day" Would it have done any good if the chief butler had remembered Joseph immediately after being restored to his position? Remember that GOD's hand is in all of this, so the timing would not have been right then. Now GOD is about to cause a drought after seven years of plenty,

and if someone were not available at the right time to warn everyone, the people of Egypy would have suffered greatly when it came. If Joseph had been released two years before this time, where would he have been when Pharaoh had his dreams? Would he have been a forgotten worker in a field, or maybe an overseer for some man? Further, GOD had promised to develop a great nation who would have to suffer through bondage before becoming that nation. This was GOD's way of developing a people who would be ready to fulfill those events as He had foretold them and when GOD wanted them to happen. A number of writers denigrate the butler for failing to remember Joseph and say that the only reason he remembered now was because he had found a way to get something for himself. They seem to forget that GOD was behind his lack of memory until GOD's timetable wanted it remembered. Obviously, the court of Pharaoh was stirred up by Pharaoh's desire to learn what these dreams meant. Everyone would have been seeking a revealing of these dreams in order to settle the mind of Pharaoh. It was in this context that GOD stirred the butler's memory.

Pharaoh's butler gave him a brief account of the events in the prison. He told him about Joseph and the accuracy with which the Hebrew youth had revealed their dreams.

Gen. 41:14-16 "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: GOD shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

> "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: GOD will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (ASV)

After Pharaoh listened to the chief butler, he immediately sent for Joseph. But Joseph could not appear before Pharaoh until he was made suitable to appear before the king. This was accomplished no doubt by a "bath," as well as being shaved and suitably

clothed. It might be observed here that Christians also appear before a king on a weekly basis. The question might be asked, "Is our clothing suitable for appearing before a monarch who has all authority?" Too many do not seem to care that they are approaching GOD wearing any old kind of clothes. One should dress suitably for the occasion in which he presents himself. Consider the priests of the Old Testament who were types of the priests of the New Testament (Christians) before one flippantly answers it does not matter how one dresses. Regarding the shaving of Joseph, the Egyptians shaved their faces and many times their heads as well.

When Joseph appeared before Pharaoh, Pharaoh told him he had had dreams which no one could interpret. He also said that he had heard that Joseph could interpret dreams which he heard. Joseph immediately let Pharaoh know that he could not interpret dreams. But he assured him that GOD could and would, in this case, reveal the meaning to him. This was to be done through Joseph. He also informed Pharaoh that he would be able to have peace of mind once the dream was revealed. This did not mean that there would not be any trouble or hard times ahead. What it would give Pharaoh was peace in that he would know what was about to happen and that there was a way to escape the destruction prophesied. In the end, he could also be assured that everything was going to be all right.

Consider Joseph's words to Pharaoh in verse sixteen. There is a rebuke to Pharaoh and any man who considers himself a god. The superstitious Egyptians considered most things around them to be gods, even Pharaoh whom they considered to be the son of Ra. Yet, none of their gods had sent these dreams to Pharaoh and none of them were capable of revealing the meaning of the dreams. Further, if Pharaoh really was a god, then why could he not interpret the dream?

Gen. 41:17-24 "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill

favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me."

> "And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the brink of the river: and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored: and they fed in the reed-grass: and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: and the lean and ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up upon one stalk, full and good: and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears: and I told it unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me." (ASV)

These verses simply recount the dreams which Pharaoh had.

Gen. 41:25-32 "And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: GOD hath shewed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What GOD is about to do He sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by GOD, and GOD will shortly bring it to pass."

> "And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: what GOD is about to do He hath declared unto Pharaoh. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven lean and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years, and also the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind; they shall be seven years of famine. That is the thing which I spake unto Pharaoh: what GOD is

about to do He hath showed unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine which followeth; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh, it is because the thing is established by GOD, and GOD will shortly bring it to pass." (ASV)

The humility of Joseph shines through in these verses. A lesser man might try to take credit for what he was about to reveal to Pharaoh. But it is to be noticed that Joseph gave all credit to GOD. He said that GOD gave the dreams. It was GOD who revealed the meaning to Pharaoh through Joseph, and Pharaoh could be assured that GOD would cause it to happen. (Note verses 16, 25, 28, 32.)

One of the interesting things in this context is that Pharaoh had two dreams, but they meant the same thing, simply using different images. When one goes back in time, he sees Joseph have two distinct dreams which also meant the same thing. Joseph's dreams showed his becoming greater than his family and their bowing to him. Pharaoh's dreams showed fourteen years of history, where there would be plenty for seven years and then seven years of famine.

The Nile River was the source of Egypt's great wealth in crops. It overflows its banks each year before the crops are planted, dropping the silt which washed down. Regarding this, Clarke quoted Pliny, which is given below for observation.

"The ordinary height of the inundations is sixteen cubits. When the waters are lower than this standard they do not overflow the whole ground; when above this standard, they are too long in running off. In the first case the ground is not saturated: by the second, the waters are detained so long on the ground that seed-time is lost. The province marks both. If it rise only twelve cubits, a famine is the consequence. Even at thirteen cubits hunger prevails; fourteen cubits produces general rejoicing; fifteen , perfect security; and sixteen, all the luxuries of life" (p. 235).

Note also the Psalmist, as he spoke of this time.

"Moreover He called for a famine upon the land: He brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters:

he was laid in iron: Until the time that His word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham" (Psalm 105:16-23).

Some critics suggest that this account cannot be accurate because of the seven years of drought mentioned. Grasham, in his commentary, notes historical evidence for seven-year droughts, which is worth the reader's attention (Vol. 2, p. 420).

Gen. 41:33-36 "Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine."

"Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. And the food shall be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine." (ASV)

It appears that Joseph did not wait for comments or questions from Pharaoh. Instead, he launched into a plan, no doubt given to him by GOD, to save Egypt. Pharaoh was told that he should search out someone to administer this plan. The qualification for such a man — "discreet" and "wise."

"discreet" — bin — *"to be intelligent, knowing"* (Zodhiates).

"wise" — chakham — *"wise, intelligent, prudent, experienced, clever"* (Zodhiates).

It should be noticed that Joseph did not seem to promote himself for this position. Whoever was chosen should be empowered with authority over the

entire land. Further, officers were to be appointed to do the work of collecting this grain. It is unclear whether it was Pharaoh who was to choose these men, or if the man whom Pharaoh appointed over the land would choose them.

What was the plan for saving Egypt? Twenty percent of the crops were to be collected during the years of plenty. This would be used as backup during the famine. It should be remembered that the word "famine" does not necessarily mean that nothing grew during this time. But what did grow would be sparse, therefore a reserve needed to be kept to offset the conditions of the famine. It is not known whether this twenty percent was a tax or whether the excess was purchased. This grain was to be kept in the cities for later distribution.

Gen. 41:37-45 "And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of GOD is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as GOD hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt."

> "And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of GOD is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as GOD hath showed thee all of this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which

he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt." (ASV)

Joseph's interpretation of the dreams was well received, as was his recommendation of how to survive the famine. The servants mentioned in verse thirty-seven were probably the king's advisors.

Pharaoh suggested that no one could be found who was as wise as Joseph to take care of, or oversee, this work. It should be remembered that Joseph ascribed his ability to interpret the dreams to GOD. Thus, Pharaoh pointed to Joseph's GOD as the One who gave him the wisdom he had.

Pharaoh immediately placed Joseph over his house and then proclaimed him a ruler over all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh gave Joseph the honors which further proclaimed him as the second in command in all Egypt. These consisted of the signet ring, which would allow him to make laws in the king's name. He also dressed him in the finest clothing of the time and put a gold necklace upon him. This necklace probably proclaimed his power. Last, he placed him in the second chariot behind Pharaoh. Pharaoh's chariot would have been a thing of beauty for its time and would have been decked in such a way as to proclaim his power. Pharaoh had them parade Joseph before the people in this chariot and proclaim that they should bow the knee before him.

Pharaoh has done all to honor Joseph as a ruler. Now he takes care of his social requirements by first giving him a wife of what would have probably been one of the leading families of the land. "On" was the home of the sun god (Ra). Pharaoh also gave Joseph an Egyptian name ("Zaphnathpaaneah") of which the meaning is indistinct.

> *"God speaks and he lives," "the god has said: he will live," and "the sustenance of the land is this living one"* (Grasham).

Even though Grasham gives these possible meanings of Joseph's Egyptian name, he freely admits that these are but guesses.

It should also be pointed out that Pharaoh says that no one can do anything without consulting and gaining Joseph's blessing.

Gen. 41:46-53 "And Joseph was thirty years old when

he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For GOD, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For GOD hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended."

> "And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph laid up grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: For, said he, GOD hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For GOD hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction. And the seven years of plenty, that was in the land of Egypt, came to an end." (ASV)

Joseph had been a slave/prisoner for thirteen years at the time he was made second ruler of Egypt. No longer was he the brash young man he had been when disclosing his dreams to his family. He was no longer the family favorite, but had learned to be a servant. Looking ahead, one can see the similarities he had with Moses in these areas. Further, he learned many lessons in management through the hardships he had endured. GOD had well prepared him for the enormous task of managing the affairs of Egypt with a cool head.

Why did Joseph go throughout the land? Being in charge of the land, he needed to know the resources available for the task he had. He would also have to make decisions about what to do with those resources and make plans for storing the grain which would be

gathered. Overseers needed to be picked who would faithfully carry out his instructions.

Just as GOD said, for seven years the abundance of the land was so great that even the twenty percent taken by Joseph could not be numbered for magnitude. Let the wisdom of Joseph also be noticed in the storing of this abundance. The grain was not taken to a central storage area. It was stored in the cities in which it was gathered. In other words, their labors were providing for their own future welfare.

During this time of plenty, two sons were born to Joseph and his wife. He named the first one Manasseh.

"Manasseh" — menashsheh — *"causing to forget"* (Strong; BDB); *"Cause to forget"* (Baker/Carpenter).

Note that Joseph said he named this child because GOD "made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." One must not lose sight that Joseph is honoring GOD for taking care of him in a great manner. Second, the text was not saying that he no longer remembered his past. Great leaders do not forget the past — they learn from the past. This past summer, this writer was privileged to "pin" his grandson. He had served in the army up until that time as a noncom, but on this day he became a commissioned officer (warrant officer). As I officially put his rank on his shoulders (pinned him), I gave him this simple advice — *"Remember who you are and never forget where you came from."* I was telling him to remember his family and the lessons learned there about GOD, and to remember the humble beginnings he had in the military. Joseph had found peace, because he could see GOD's plan for him unfolded and the necessity of his being sold into slavery, learning the lessons of humility and how to govern. *"The sting is gone out of the remembrance"* (Leupold, p. 1038).

Joseph named his second son Ephraim because he had been made fruitful in Egypt.

"Ephraim" — ephrayim — *"double fruit"* (Strong); *"Double ashheap: I shall be doubly fruitful"* (BDB); *"The name is a dual form and indicates fruitfulness"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 87).

Verse fifty-three simply states that the years of plenty in Egypt ended.

Gen. 41:54-57 "And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished,

the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands."

> "And the seven years of famine began to come, according as Joseph had said: and there was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine was sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was sore in all the earth." (ASV)

"And the seven years of dearth began to come" Egypt had been known as the "breadbasket" of the ancient world. If not for GOD through Joseph, it would have been known as the death of the ancient world during this time. Now the dearth/famine has come upon Egypt and "in all the lands."

"dearth" — raab — *"hunger (more or less extensive)"* (Strong); *"famine, hunger"* (BDB); *"It refers to a general and acute failure of crops, a serious shortage of food and/or water"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1065).

In times of famine, there is most assuredly food available, just not in sufficient quantities as before. The famine was also in the land of Canaan, yet note what will be later said when Joseph's brothers prepared to return to Egypt.

> "Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down to the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds" (Genesis 43:11).

This passage indicates that there were things growing, but not totally sufficient to provide for the needs of their families.

"began" — chalal — *"A primitive root; properly to (bore) that (is) (by implication) to {wound} to dissolve"* (Strong); *"to profane, defile, pollute, desecrate, begin"* (BDB); *"the core meaning of this root and its history in cognate languages is rather uncertain; as such it appears to represent three different homophonic verbs...the third verb means to profane, defile, pollute; to prostitute; to*

make common; to loose; to break" (Zodhiates).

As the famine truly began to take hold, the lands around them would be suffering terribly. Though the Egyptians would also be suffering, they did have food, because GOD fulfilled His word to Joseph. Again, the process would have required Joseph to hold onto the food until it was absolutely needed. When the people spoke to Pharaoh about their need, he sent to Joseph. He trusted Joseph, because everything Joseph said would happen happened, and he had faithfully exhibited the management skills GOD had given him. Under Joseph's care, Egypt prospered.

Finally, the time had come to open the storehouses and provide the grain needed by the people. But before those words were recorded for us, the Bible says the famine "was over all the face of the earth." This would affect Joseph's Hebrew family, just as GOD intended. So Joseph gave the people the food they needed — **not!** He sold them the food. Welfare societies would say to give them the food without cost. That which cost nothing is worth nothing and often squandered. But such would create a society which would in effect be a slavery society — enslaved to the government. This is no different from a man owning another man. It would create a society which has no reason to work and no reason to sacrifice in order to live. In such a society (socialism), the ruling classes have all they want and those they rule over have little. Eventually, such a society will collapse, because the lack of incentive to work robs them all of the necessities of life, much less the pleasures of life.

At this point, a lengthy quote is going to be included by Morris, because it needs to be included. Why? Because GOD was obviously directing Joseph to sell the grain and not give it away. The Bible clearly shows that man should work for his food.

> "even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Consider that when Adam and Eve were in the perfect garden with all they needed, they were commanded to "keep" the garden. With these thoughts in mind, please read the following quote from Morris with profit.

> *"Advocates of welfarism may wonder why Joseph did not simply give the food to the people instead of making them buy it. Joseph instead maintained strict control over the supplies, in order to prevent looting and waste, knowing that even the vast supplies that had been accumulated would have to be carefully*

husbanded to last through seven long years of famine. He then sold them for a reasonable price and on an equitable basis to all who were in need of grain. Had it been given away, 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 to it for seven years. To give it away would have meant bankrupting and probably destroying the government. It was thus perfectly right and proper for the grain to be sold, not given as a handout, to all who could afford to pay. It is reasonable to assume that special provision was made for those who were truly in poverty and could not buy. Quite likely, they were employed on useful government service or construction of one form or another, in order to earn the necessary cash or credit to buy the supplies they needed. The people could hardly be taxed in significant amounts during the years of famine, since they were producing little; so the income from the sale of grain in effect had to take the place of taxes during those years" (p.592).

"the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt" The famine was severe, yet Egypt survived because GOD had provided. The people learned to cut back instead of thinking it was their "right" to continue having everything they wanted without putting forth effort to obtain these things. Not only was the famine severe in Egypt, but it was so in all the lands (nations). Verse fifty-four prepares the way for Joseph's family's coming to Egypt for food. They were doing what everyone else was doing — everyone was coming to buy food from Egypt. They did not expect to be given food.

Genesis — Chapter Forty-two

Gen. 42:1-2 "Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die."

"Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die." (ASV)

It is interesting that in the times of the first three "fathers" of the Israelite nation, there were famines in the land in each of their lives. The famine during Abraham's time is recorded in Genesis twelve, and that for Isaac's time is recorded in Genesis twenty-six.

In verse one, Jacob "saw" that there was grain in Egypt, and in verse two he said that he "heard" there was grain in Egypt. He had not been to Egypt, so how could he see grain there? Was it through the mind's eye of faith or through those who had already gone to Egypt and returned with grain which he saw? One may not literally have seen the Lord on the cross, but he has head it. Because he believes the reports of that event, it is proper through the mind's eye to say that he has seen it.

Jacob's sons appear to be indecisive as to what should be done. Is it possible that their indecision was based in part upon their guilty consciences? From the language used, it appears that their situation was becoming desperate. There appears to be the real danger of starving to death if they do not get food shortly. Jacob decisively ordered his sons to go to Egypt and get grain.

Gen. 42:3-4 "And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him."

> "And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest Peradventure harm befall him." (ASV)

At their father's command, the ten brothers left for Egypt. One cannot help but wonder if they thought about what they had done to Joseph during this trip. Later events seem to indicate that they might have. It is also observed that Jacob would not let his youngest son (Benjamin) go with them. Benjamin's beloved mother was Rachel, Jacob's favorite. Since Joseph was dead, so he thought, Benjamin was now his favorite son. He did not want to see any possibility of harm being done to this son who was all he had left of Rachel.

Gen. 42:5-7 "And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the

land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food."

> "And the sons of Israel came to buy among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land; he it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves to him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly with them; and he said unto them. Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food." (ASV)

Joseph's brothers finally arrived in Egypt after their long journey, where they will come face to face with Joseph. Just as Joseph predicted, when they came before him, they bowed to him in submission (Genesis 37:7-8). Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize him. There are several factors which may play into the fact that they did not recognize him. (1) Twenty years have passed, and he could have changed enough that they did not recognize him. (2) The way he was dressed could have had something to with missing his identity. This writer remembers an embarrassing moment in his life when he worked at General Motors. A colleague died, and when this writer went to the funeral home, he did not recognize the man in the coffin, because he had never seen him in anything other than greasy overalls with a cap on. Now that he was in a suit, he was unrecognizable. (3) Joseph spoke the Egyptian language and used interpreters to speak to them. Thus, he was treating them as strangers — he pretended not to know them. (4) He also probably had a shaved head and shaved face, as was the custom of the Egyptians.

When the text says that the whole land bought their grain from Joseph, it must be understood that he could not have accomplished this all by himself. There is no doubt that he had appointed men to help him in this matter. It may have been that they took care of the domestic side of these purchases, while he personally handled the foreign purchases. Generally speaking, no grin could be sold without Joseph's permission, whether it was directly through him or one of his agents.

When looking at the extent of the famine, it might also be considered that Joseph may have anticipated his brothers' coming for grain. He knew that people from the areas all around Canaan were coming. His

brothers and their families would need food just as badly as others, and there was only one place to get it — Egypt.

When Joseph spoke to them, he spoke in a severe manner.

> "roughly" — qasheh — *"severe"* (Strong); *"hard, cruel, severe, obstinate"* (BDB); *"It means hard, difficult, severe, unfeeling, cruel, harsh (words)"* (Zodhiates).

Considering the context, he did not do this to take vengeance upon them. He did it to test them. There is no doubt in this writer's mind that he was already planning to bring them to Egypt. Remember that he was the instrument GOD was using to create a nation that must first live in slavery.

Gen. 42:8-11 "And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies."

> "And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies." (ASV)

There will be much repetition in these verses, which indicates to this writer that Joseph grilled them intently. If they had not been fearful before this interrogation, they were probably becoming so.

Joseph knew who they were, which brought to the forefront of his mind the dreams he had had back in Canaan. He knew that the beginning of the fulfillment of his dreams had begun. They would not be completely fulfilled until all of his family came and bowed before him.

He began his questioning by accusing them of being spies. It seems that, since he obviously had others to help him in these affairs, a lower-positioned person may have brought them to Joseph's attention and accused them of this crime. Thus, Joseph directly got involved in this case.

His brothers protested that they were not there to spy out the land, but simply to buy food. They claimed that they were true men, i.e., honest men. They claimed to be the sons of one man. The argument

seems to be that a man would not risk so many of his sons on a dangerous spy mission, for if caught, his family would have been destroyed through the death of these sons.

Gen. 42:12-14 "And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:"

> "And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, We thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:" (ASV)

Joseph persisted in his charge of spying. When one goes back, he remembers that when he had pleaded with his brothers, they would not listen to his pleas. Now the shoe is on the other foot.

They now added the information that this man in Canaan had actually had twelve sons. The youngest was still at home with his father, and one son "was not." It seems that by now the brothers believed that Joseph was probably dead, for that is how the term "was not" is used in the Scriptures. The thought also exists that they might have simply been continuing their deception, fearing to admit their evil deeds.

Joseph continued his attack, but he now offered them a way to prove their innocence.

Gen. 42:15-17 "Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days."

> "hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be bound, that your words may be proved, whether there be truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days." (ASV)

"Hereby ye shall be proved" Joseph was ready to test them.

"proved" — bachan — *"A primitive root; to test (especially metals); generally and figuratively to* ***investigate****"* (Strong); *"to examine, scrutinize, to test, prove, try (of gold, persons, the heart, man of God)"* (BDB); *"to try, prove, test, examine, search out, purify, to look out, to watch...The word denotes an investigation to determine the essential qualities of the object, especially integrity. It is used almost exclusively in the spiritual sense, attaining knowledge intuitively"* (Zodhiates).

What is the test he proposed? *"If you are true men, men of integrity, then you will bring your younger brother to me."* He made this pronouncement by the authority of Pharaoh. If that brother was not brought to him, then they would not be allowed to leave Egypt. The implication to them was probably that they would remain in prison, or possibly be made slaves, or be put to death. They did not know what would happen. They were helpless and possibly felt hopeless, since their father had insisted that Benjamin could not go with them. Could it be that they now thought of the time when they had sold their brother into Egypt? Could they have been feeling as helpless and hopeless as he had when they cast him into the pit?

Joseph proposed that one of them be sent to get their brother while the rest of them remained in prison. Note the words "whether there be **any truth** in you" (emphasis mine, RK). They had lied to their father, been untrue to him; they had lied to Joseph in saying that he was dead. Were they still the same kind of men? Did they hate Benjamin as they had hated him? Remember that when they told him he had a younger brother, the text seems to indicate that he did not know about Benjamin.

He put them in prison for three days. This gave them time to consider which one would be sent, and it appears, to consider their past sins against Joseph.

Gen. 42:18-20 "And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear GOD: If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so."

"And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live: for I fear GOD: if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in your prison-house; but go ye, carry grain for the famine of your houses: and bring your youngest

brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so." (ASV)

After three days of imprisonment, they were again brought into the presence of Joseph. What was to be their fate? Joseph told them to do what he said, and they would live. Why did he say this? "for I fear GOD" Most scholars this writer has read after state that he was telling them that he worshiped the GOD of Heaven, as they did. Further, they add that this could have caused suspicion among the brothers. Considering that Joseph appeared to be an Egyptian, why would they think he worshiped the same GOD they did? The statement is quite generic and could refer to any god. Today it is known by Bible students that Joseph was indeed a worshiper of the true GOD, but would they have known that? Though he used the word Elohiym, this term could have simply referred to deity. Most people today believe the term Elohiym refers only to The GOD of Heaven, the true GOD. But a study of the Lexicons shows its use can refer to any god or multiple gods, as well as GOD.

Joseph proposed that nine of them would go home with the food they came to purchase for their families. One would remain in an Egyptian prison while they were gone. If they did not return with their younger brother, this one was to be killed. The phrase "ye shall not die" should be considered. If they did not bring Benjamin to Him, they would die of famine, and if they came back empty-handed, they would supposedly "die by Joseph's hand."

"And they did so." This refers to all that is going to happen, though at this time none of it had been accomplished.

Gen. 42:21-23 "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter."

"And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore also, behold, his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for there was an interpreter

between them." (ASV)

Being imprisoned for three days had apparently caused them to meditate on what they had done to their brother Joseph. Despite his pleas, they had ignored his words, and now Pharaoh's right-hand man had ignored their words of innocence to his charge. Now they were receiving what they had done to Joseph.

> "Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Who did these brothers blame for the situation in which they found themselves? Only themselves. Notice they did not blame GOD, or the governor, or anyone else. They apparently believed that Joseph was dead, and now they were reaping what they had sown — they accepted it as just deserts.

> "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of GOD made He man" (Genesis 9:6).

It should also be considered that this is the only confession of sin by a guilty party found in the book of Genesis.

"he spake unto them by an interpreter." The brother's had no way of knowing that Joseph did not need an interpreter to understand them. Thus, they spoke openly among themselves of their sin and obvious regret for their actions. One often thinks if he could do things over, he would do them much differently. But in all honesty, would he?

Some writers expressed the opinion that Reuben's words were trying to pass the blame, to declare that he was innocent of what "they had done." But Reuben was not innocent. For at least twenty years he had participated in a cover-up of their deeds. He was just as guilty as his brothers, and this writer believes he recognized this. Reuben was the oldest, and therefore would normally be held accountable; yet it was Simeon, the next oldest, which Joseph kept imprisoned.

Gen. 42:24-25 "And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them."

> "And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and he returned to them, and spake to them, and took Simeon from among them, and bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph commanded to fill their vessels with grain, and to

restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provisions for the way: and thus was it done unto them." (ASV)

It appears obvious that, at the time of this text, Joseph did not want them to see him weeping. His heart had been touched with gladness, as all godly hearts should be touched by the repentance and admission of guilt which his brothers had displayed. So he turned away from them, which must mean he left their presence, because the text goes on to say he "returned to them." It would have taken at least a few moments for him to recover and mask any marks of tears from his eyes.

Simeon was taken and bound before them.

> *"The rabbins suppose, it was Simeon who bound Joseph, and put him into the pit"* (Clarke, Vol. 1, p. 240).

He was not simply taken away; he was bound. This would have further emphasized to these brothers that this was a serious matter. It should be considered that Simeon had been guilty of extreme cruelty in causing the deaths of the people of Shechem (Genesis 34). Remember that Joseph was still with his family when this took place and would have remembered his actions. Possibly when he learned that Reuben had tried to spare him, he may have considered Simeon to have been the ring leader in their earlier actions toward him. If such were the case, this would have no doubt caused the brothers to continue believing that recompense was being exhibited toward them by GOD. After all, how could this Egyptian have known of Simeon's previous actions or that he was second oldest among them?

Joseph next did three things: (1) filled their sacks with grain, (2) secretly had their money returned to them, and (3) provided provender for their animals as they traveled. In the next few verses, it will be seen what returning their money did to them. Was Joseph paving the way for his charge later that they were thieves? Or was this simply done from the kindness of his heart? Or was it done to heap coals of fire upon their heads?

When casually considering the language, one might get the idea that they only had one sack each. It should be remembered that they were getting supplies of food for a very large household at this time. They would probably have had a number of beasts of burden to carry these supplies.

Gen. 42:26-28 "And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that GOD hath done unto us?"

> "And they laded their asses with their grain, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the lodging-place, he espied his money; and, behold, it was in the mouth of his sack. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they turned trembling one to another, saying, What is this that GOD hath done unto us?" (ASV)

When these brothers reached the "inn" — malon (*"lodging-place"* - ASV; "encampment" - NKJV) where they camped for the night, one of them was feeding his ass when he discovered his money in the top of the sack. When they realized this money had been returned to them, the text says "their heart failed them." They were "afraid." Their fear would soon increase.

"afraid" — charad — *"A primitive root; to shudder with terror, hence to fear"* (Strong); *"to tremble, quake, move about, be afraid, be startled, be terrified"* (BDB); *"to quake, be afraid, tremble; to move around; to be startled; to be anxious; to come with trepidation; to frighten, terrify"* (Zodhiates).

"What is this that GOD hath done unto us?" Their guilty consciences were on full display. They knew they had done wrong to Joseph, and they felt that GOD was involved in causing their troubles. If the famine continued, they knew they would have to return to Egypt for more food. They might have been thinking that they were being set up for a fall when they returned to Egypt. The Governor of Egypt had accused them of being spies. Would he now accuse them of being thieves?

Regarding the word "inn" in the KJV. This is not like one would picture today. There were no buildings of any kind. It was probably a place where water could be found, either a spring or well, and thus a good place to camp for the night.

Another thought to be considered is the number of animals which made up their "caravan." They were making a journey of about two hundred and fifty miles. They and their animals would have eaten quite a bit on this journey. They could not have made this journey in a half day, as could be done today. It would probably

have taken close to two weeks to accomplish in their time. One animal each would never have provided what they and their families needed back home. Consider also that in the text ahead, it will appear that it was a while before they consumed the grain they brought home and needed to go back for more.

"What is this that GOD hath done unto us?" Interestingly they did not consider that Joseph could have possibly done this. It would seem that their guilty consciences, having been stirred up by recent events, thought GOD was exercising justice for their past deeds. Joseph had accused them of being spies, now they seem to envision being accused of being thieves as well as being spies.

Gen. 42:29-34 "And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land."

> "And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that had befallen them, saying, The man, the lord of the land, spake roughly with us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; and we are no spies: we are twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the land, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men: leave one of your brethren with me, and take grain for the famine of your houses, and go your way; and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land." (ASV)

The above verses are no doubt a short version of all they told their father of their experiences.

Gen. 42:35-38 "And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father

saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

> "And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he only is left: if harm befall him by the way in which ye go, then will ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol." (ASV)

One of this scribe's teachers said that the definition of worry *"is paying in advance for something you usually do not receive"* (Frank Young, from my notes). It would seem in these verses that Jacob is guilty of the sin of worry.

When they began emptying their sacks, it was discovered that all of the money taken to purchase the grain was found in them. This caused even greater fear than when one bag of money was discovered at the "inn."

"Joseph is not, and Simeon is not" It is to be remembered that Jacob believed Joseph was dead for over twenty years. Now he used the same language to refer to Simeon. Why would he think Simeon was dead? Because the brothers had told him that, if they did not return with Benjamin before the ruler of the land, then Simeon's fate would be death. Since Jacob had at this point decided that Benjamin would not go to Egypt with them, he could only assume that Simeon would die. He spoke as though it was already a fact. Jacob believed that Benjamin was the only link he still had with his beloved Rachel. He was not about to take a chance on losing that link.

> *"Though it is unreasonable grief and fear that speak, yet the father hits closer to the truth than he guessed when he charges his sons with being the ones who were making him childless.*

How the sons must have winced at the charge, wondering how much their father actually guessed! How their already sensitive conscience must have smarted still more" (Leupold, Vol. 2, p. 1058).

In this, one is again reminded of the favoritism which has caused so much trouble in Jacob's family. He had placed one wife and her children above the rest, and the results were inevitable — such is the result of polygamy.

Next, one sees Reuben making an absurd offer. It appears they were resigned to the fact that they were going to be returning to Egypt for more food at a future date. It appears that they were resigned to the fact that they were going to be returning to Egypt for more food at a future date. If he did not bring Benjamin back when they go back to Egypt, Jacob can kill his sons. No grandfather with half a heart would kill his own grandchildren. This writer's wife said that if she had known how wonderful grandchildren were, she would have skipped the children and gone straight to the grandchildren. He had to remind her that it did not work that way. What is seen on Reuben's part, is that he will take responsibility for bringing Benjamin back. Jacob was emphatically saying, *"You are not taking Benjamin to Egypt."*

Genesis Chapter Forty-three

Gen. 43:1-2 "And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food."

"And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food." (ASV)

The famine which was consuming the land is described as "sore," i.e., *"heavy, severe"* (habed – Strong). As such, very little was being produced, and there was no end in sight.

The grain which had been purchased by Israel's sons had been exhausted, and they would starve if no more was obtained. Therefore, Israel told his sons to go and try to get more. It should be considered here that Israel was looking at this situation from a human perspective. How easy it seems to live a life of faith, but then to allow the events around one to squeeze GOD into the background. GOD's providence was

working for the benefit of His people, but Israel was not relying upon GOD as he should have. GOD's providence is still working today, but like Israel of old, it is so easy to forget that and try to take matters into one's own hands. Do what can be done and trust in GOD to provide.

Gen. 43:3-5 "And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you."

> "And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." (ASV)

Judah answered for his brothers, saying that Joseph ("the man") repeatedly warned them about coming back without Benjamin.

> "solemnly protest" — ud — *"to duplicate or repeat"* (Strong); *"to bear witness, say again and again"* (BDB); "It means to duplicate, repeat, say again and again" (Zodhiates).

In essence, Judah was saying that Joseph meant what he said. Therefore, going back to Egypt without Benjamin would be a waste of time and effort. Then note that Judah said they **would not** go back unless Israel sent Benjamin with them. This again indicates that they believed the words of this ruler.

Why was Judah now the spokesman for his brothers? Where was Reuben?

> *"Reuben had forfeited his pre-eminence by incest (35:22); Simeon was incarcerated; Levi had displayed cruel bloodthirstiness (34:25)...He* (Judah) *was relatively innocent of disposing of Joseph (37:26)"* (Leupold, p. 1061).

Another consideration is put forward by Grasham.

> *"The old man had long since lost confidence in his firstborn son. Not only had Reuben committed incest with Bilhah (35:22), but he had been unable to keep Joseph safe (37:29-35) and had returned from Egypt without Simeon (42:24, 36"* (p. 458).

When considering the above quotation by Grasham, one should remember that at the time of this text, Israel

would not have known that Reuben could have saved Joseph. At any rate, there was a leadership void which Judah filled. Any time there is a leadership void, someone will step up to fill that void. The only question is, Will that person be a good or bad leader?

Gen. 43:6-7 "And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?"

> "And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked straitly concerning ourselves, and concerning our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we in any wise know that he would say, Bring your brother down?" (ASV)

Israel allowed his emotions regarding Benjamin to take over and again showed his partiality. It would seem that Israel was accusing them of having loose tongues (*"loose lips sink ships"*). Had they been loosely revealing information about the family which caused this man to make the demands he had which could endanger Benjamin?

> "ill" — raa — *"A primitive root; properly to spoil (literally by breaking to pieces): figuratively to make (or be) good for (nothing)"* (Strong); *"to break, shatter...to be broken, be broken in pieces, be broken asunder"* (BDB); "this verb means to spoil by breaking to pieces; to break; to make something useless or evil, to afflict; to dash in pieces, shatter; be broken; to destroy; to be shaken violently; to perish" (Zodhiates).

Judah basically said, *"How could we know how the man would react to this information?"* Then they explained how he had asked them direct questions about their family. Remember that they had been accused multiple times of being spies. When he asked specific questions about their family, they did not dare give him vague answers. If they had given evasive answers, it would have been used as evidence that they were spies.

Gen. 43:8-10 "And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our

little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time."

> "And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: for except we had lingered, surely we had now returned a second time." (ASV)

These three verses indicate that a return to Egypt had been discussed previously. What held them back? It was Israel's refusing to let Benjamin go. Now the situation had become more critical. They were faced with losing not just a son but the entire family if they did not get more food soon ("both we, and thou, and also our little ones").

Judah took the lead and offered to bear the shame if he did not bring Benjamin back. Before, Reuben had offered to allow Israel to kill his sons; but that was a foolish thing, which Israel would not have done.

"surety" — arab — *"to pledge, exchange, mortgage, engage, occupy, undertake for, give pledges, be or become surety, take on pledge, give in pledge"* (BDB); *"this root means to braid; to intermix, interweave, intermingle, to have business dealings; to traffic, to exchange; to mortgage, to pledge, give security, be a co–signer: (liable for another's debt), be a guarantor for the life of another; to warrant; to rival; to undertake; to risk one's life"* (Zodhiates).

Judah reminded his father that they could have already returned from a second trip if they had not delayed.

"lingered" — mahahh — *"properly to question or (hesitate), i.e., (by implication) to be **reluctant**: delay, linger, stay, tarry"* (Strong); *"to linger, tarry, wait, delay"* (BDB); *"A verb meaning to tarry, to hesitate, to linger. It means to delay doing something"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 575).

"Delay increases the suffering and mends nothing" (Leupold, p. 1064).

Gen. 43:11-13 "And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down to the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and

myrrh, nuts, and almonds: And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:"

> "And their father Israel said unto them, If it be so now, do this: take of the choice fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spicery and myrrh, nuts, and almonds; and take double money in your hand; and the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks carry again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:" (ASV)

Israel finally submitted to the inevitable and agreed to send Benjamin with his brothers to get more food. He had no choice, as things were getting desperate for the whole family.

He said they should take a present to the man. It might be remembered that, when he approached Esau coming with a host to meet him, he sent a present to placate him. Such a present was meant to accomplish two things: (1) Show oneself to be an inferior, and (2) to soothe the anger which had been expressed. Such a gift would consist of the best one had to give. The list of the gifts is given in verse eleven, and no further comment will be given except with regard to the KJV's use of the word "nuts."

"nuts" — boten — *"a pistachio nut"* (Strong, BDB, Baker/Carpenter, p. 129).

It is estimated that the drought had been going on for about two years. Further, the land appears to be producing **a little**, as well as some of this gift was probably gained through trade or purchase.

Israel's sons were also told to take double the money which they had apparently taken the first time to Egypt. It would seem that he possibly anticipated that the price for grain had gone up, as such is likely to happen when an item is scarce. They were also instructed to take the money back which they had found in their bags. By taking it back, they were declaring that they were honest men who were only seeking food for their family.

It should be emphasized that Jacob has finally submitted to allowing Benjamin to go, because now the entire family is threatened with starvation.

Gen. 43:14 "And GOD Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

"and GOD Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release unto you your other brother and Benjamin. And if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." (ASV)

In chapter forty-two, Jacob said, "all these things are against me." This showed a weakness on his part — his faith was waning. It **appeared** to him that everything was working against him. The reality was that GOD was still in control. He had not abandoned Israel nor his family. Instead, GOD was working in His own time frame and by His own means not only to save Israel's family but also to create a mighty nation through which the Messiah would come.

Verse fourteen shows a renewed trust in GOD and submission to His will. He turned to "GOD Almighty" (El Shadday -- the GOD of Abraham) in prayer for his sons well-being on this journey. He was resigned that this trip may not go well and placed the whole matter in GOD's hands for disposition.

Gen. 43:15-21 "And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand."

"And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, Bring the men into the house, and slay, and make ready; for the men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men to Joseph's house. And the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and

they spake unto him at the door of the house, and said, Oh, my lord, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: and it came to pass, when we came to the lodging-place, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand." (ASV)

Their journey back to Egypt was made with the gifts Israel prescribed, but most importantly with Benjamin at their side. The reception they received must have been astounding to them. The ruler, after seeing that Benjamin was with them, ordered his steward to take them to his house and prepare a meal for them to dine with him.

The attitude of the steward is commendable. He did not question the instructions he had been given, but simply did what he was told. A steward is one who is entrusted to manage the affairs of another, whether it be personal (household) or business. Consideration should be given to the fact that Christians are to devote themselves to the affairs of GOD. He has given the commands, and it is not man's place to question them, but rather simply to do them.

It is seen that a guilty conscience can conjure up all kinds of danger which does not exist. It seems they were afraid of going to the ruler's house, thinking that they were about to be taken as slaves by an accusation of being thieves for the money they had found in their sacks. They took the quickest means available to plead their case with Joseph's steward. They correctly claimed that they did not know how the money had gotten into their bags.

Gen. 43:22-25 "And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your GOD, and the GOD of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there"

"And other money have we brought down in our hand to buy food: we know not who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your GOD, and the GOD of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet. And he gave their asses provender. And they made ready the present

against Joseph's coming at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there." (ASV)

They showed their honest intent by bringing back the money they found and by showing that they brought additional funds to purchase more food. The steward assured them that he had received their money and that they had nothing to fear. He went so far as to state that their GOD must have provided them with this treasure.

As further proof that they should not fear, Simeon was brought out to them. One can only guess at the happiness expressed when they reunited and saw that he was unharmed. The steward provided them water to wash their feet and provided their animals with food.

The next thing noted is their preparation to give the gift sent by Israel to this man. This would probably have been laid out in some fashion to try to make it appear as extravagant as possible. Now they simply had to wait for noon to arrive.

Gen. 43:26-30 "And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, GOD be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there."

"And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they said, Thy servant our father is well, he is yet alive. And they bowed the head, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, GOD be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his heart yearned over his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." (ASV)

When Joseph came home for the noon meal, his brothers presented him with their gifts. Joseph did not desire to reveal himself just yet. As the Bible student is well aware, he still had some tests for them. Notice that

when they presented their gifts, they bowed themselves to Joseph.

"bowed" – shachah — *"to (depress) that (is) prostrate (especially reflexively in homage to royalty or God)"* (Strong); *"to bow down, prostrate oneself before a superior in homage, before God in worship"* (BDB); *"to depress; to prostrate oneself (in homage to royalty or to God); to bow down; to crouch; to fall down, sink down; to humbly beseech; to do obeisance; to worship."* (Zodhiates).

All eleven of the brothers were joined together in this action, just as Joseph's dreams said they would be (Genesis 37). They had ridiculed Joseph when he told them his dream, but now they did just as GOD showed Joseph they would do. It might be considered here that, in Joseph's dreams, the order was his brothers' bowing down to him, and at a later date his whole family's bowing before him — exactly as it happened.

Joseph continued his act by asking them about their health and well-being. He also asked them about "your father." The word "well" in verse twenty-seven comes from shalom, the Hebrew word for peace.

"well" — shalom shalom — *"{safe} that {is} (figuratively) {well} happy, friendly; also (abstractly) {welfare} that {is} {health} {prosperity}* ***peace****"* (Strong); *"completeness, soundness, welfare, peace"* (BDB); *"It means health, security, tranquility, welfare (e.g., asking about the welfare of someone in a greeting), good condition, success, comfort; peace"* (Zodhiates).

Joseph did well in his acting until he laid his eyes on his full brother, and it was verified that this was Benjamin. When Joseph was sold into slavery, Benjamin would have been a very young boy, so he sought verification. Now Joseph was in danger of allowing his affections to overcome him and thus reveal himself to them. He hurried to his room to weep for joy, then cleaned himself up and returned for dinner.

Note what might be considered a minor detail. Before leaving them to weep, Joseph told Benjamin, "GOD be gracious unto thee, my son." This may seem like simple hospitality, yet, it fits into the tests Joseph had prepared for them. He had not said anything similar to the other brothers, but had instead treated them harshly. If they resented special treatment for Benjamin, as they had for him, this might have provoked them.

"If Jeremiah is the so-called 'weeping prophet,' Joseph is the 'weeping patriarch'" (Mathews, p.

791).

Gen. 43:31-34 "And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him."

> "And he washed his face, and came out; and he refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, that did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one with another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him." (ASV)

When someone has been crying, there are usually evidences that such is the case. Joseph prepared to go back to the dining room by washing his face.

The first thing noticed is the seating arrangement. Joseph as master, and according to his rank, would be seated by himself. Then his "fellow" Egyptians would have their own table, and lastly these Hebrews would have been seated by themselves. This involved what would be called today a caste system. This writer has traveled extensively in the East and has seen and been a part of such seating arrangements. Joseph's brothers, being Hebrews, were not allowed to be seated with the Egyptians, because such would have been an abomination.

> "abomination" — toebah toebah — *"properly something disgusting (morally) that is an abhorrence"* (Strong); *"a disgusting thing, abomination, abominable"* (BDB); *"It is something which is morally disgusting, an abomination, an abominable thing"* (Zodhiates).

His servants were told to serve the meal, and this is where it gets interesting. He had the brothers seated according to their ages. How could he do this? From where did his knowledge come? Coffman states that the odds of putting twelve men in their birth order would

be 39,917,000 to one. Of course the reader knows that this has not been done by chance nor special knowledge given by deity. The brothers did not know this. Thus, it would have been very amazing to his brothers, and they recognized it and spoke to each other about it.

Joseph next put another test before the brothers by giving them food from his own table. But when it came to Benjamin, he gave him five times what he gave each of the other brothers. How would they react? Would they show resentment? But none of this seemed to bother the brothers in the least. They passed this test, but there was more to come.

Genesis — Chapter Forty-four

Gen. 44:1-3 "And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses."

> "And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his grain money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses." (ASV)

The final test began for Joseph's brothers. Were they still the heartless men who had sold Joseph into bondage and deceived their father? Would they abandon Benjamin, when it would be so easy to do so based on the charge against him?

Joseph commanded his steward to give them as much grain as they could carry, put their money back in their sacks as he had done before, and put his special cup in Benjamin's sack. However that cup was made, or designed, it obviously was done in such a way that its owner could not be confused with any other. One can only imagine what the steward was thinking as these instructions were given to him. If this writer had been in that position, he would have had to wonder why Joseph was doing this and where these actions would lead.

When morning came, they began their journey home, but the journey would end abruptly. In their minds, as they began this journey, they would have to be rejoicing at their success. Simeon and Benjamin

were both with them, and their sacks were full of grain.

Gen. 44:4-6 "And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words."

> "And when they were gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this that in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he indeed divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these words." (ASV)

It appears that Joseph waited until his brothers were outside the city walls or limits, and then he sent his steward to overtake them. When he caught up with them, he made two charges against them — ingratitude and theft.

Two things are stated about the cup in question: (1) Joseph drinks from it, and (2) this is the cup he used for purposes of divination.

> "divineth" — nachash — *"A primitive root; properly to (hiss), i.e., whisper a (magic) spell; generally to* ***prognosticate****"* (Strong); *"to practice divination, divine, observe signs, learn by experience, diligently observe, practice fortunetelling, take as an omen"* (Thayer); "to hiss; to whisper (a magical spell); to practice sorcery, to take as an omen, to give oracles; to divine, foretell, prognosticate" (Zodhiates).

In his commentary on Genesis, Leupold listed various ways this was done.

> *"Practicing divination is a heathen custom. The type referred to here is cup-divination...As far as the practice as such is concerned, it is said to have been used in several forms. Some poured clear water into a bowl or a cup and then strewed into the water small pieces or particles of gold and of silver or even of precious stones. Some poured oil into the water. Still others observed the manner in which light rays broke on the surface. Usually the resulting designs to be observed in the water, whether from the particles thrown into it, or from the oil, were construed after certain rules in order to draw conclusions as to the future"* (Vol. 2, p. 1081).

Did Joseph practice the heathen art of "cup-divination?" The Scriptures show that he would not have done such a thing. Consider Genesis 41:16, 25, 39, Joseph let Pharaoh know that only GOD could give the meaning of dreams (and by implication reveal the future). To Joseph the cup was probably simply a symbol of his position and authority. It must also be remembered that Joseph, was playing a part so as not to reveal himself to his brothers. The superstitious Egyptians, on the other hand, would have believed he was using some such means as a cup for divination purposes.

Gen. 44:7-10 "And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? GOD forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless."

> "And they said unto him, Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these? Far be it from thy servants that they should do such a thing. Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my bondman; and ye shall be blameless." (ASV)

Basically they were saying, *"How could you possibly charge us with such a crime? Do you really believe we would return the hospitality shown us by stealing from your lord?"* They protested their innocence by reminding the steward that they had brought back the money they had found in their sacks after their first visit to Egypt. This was a strong argument for innocence.

Note their confidence that they were innocent of the crime with which they were charged. If the ruler's cup was found among them, they said they would serve as slaves, and the one who had the cup should be put to death. Again, this would be a strong evidence under normal circumstances that they were innocent.

Joseph's steward said they would be judged by their own words. But he amended their rash statement by telling them that only the guilty one would become a slave, and the rest were to be allowed to go home. No

doubt the steward had been told to bring only Benjamin back, so he had amended their statement.

The rash statement made by the brothers here no doubt reminds one of a similar statement made by Jacob to Laban (Genesis 31).

Gen. 44:11-13 "Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city."

> "Then they hasted, and took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left off at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city." (ASV)

The brothers eagerly opened their sacks to prove their innocence. Whereupon the steward carefully searched each man's bag, beginning with the eldest to the youngest. After several sacks had been searched, they probably were at least thinking, *"See, we told you so."* But then Benjamin's sack was opened, and there was the cup. How could this be?

It is interesting that they appear to believe Benjamin to be innocent, since they did not question him. This does not mean that they did not question him, but if they did, upon his insistence of innocence, they accepted it. The steward had told them that only the one who was guilty would pay the penalty. What would these brothers do? Would they abandon Benjamin as they had Joseph and hurry home, saving their own hides?

The brothers with one accord tore their clothes, a sign of deep mourning. Instead of leaving Benjamin to his fate, they all returned with him to face this stern ruler.

> *"This situation presented a new irony: The brothers were guilty of selling Joseph into bondage without remorse; this time they were innocent of a supposed crime, yet they demonstrated deep agony over Benjamin's prospective future"* (Grasham, Vol. 2, p. 481).

While they were returning to face Joseph, one can only imagine the turmoil of their minds. But one thing is evident at this point — they would not abandon their brother in his time of need.

Gen. 44:14-17 "And Judah and his brethren came to

Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? GOD hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he said, GOD forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

> "And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; and he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? know ye not that such a man as I can indeed divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? GOD hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's bondmen, both we, and he also in whose hand the cup is found. And he said, Far be it from me that I should do so: the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my bondman; but as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." (ASV)

When the brothers were brought back to Joseph's house, they did the only thing they could — they prostrated themselves before him. How Joseph must have thought back to the dreams that had predicted this very act.

Joseph continued to play his part superbly. "How could you do such a thing? How could you think you could steal from me and get away with it?" Joseph said he could "divine" what they had done. Again, Joseph was not speaking about the heathen practices of sin, but playing his part **as if he were a heathen who believed in such practices**. Yet, at the same time, they surely recognized he had the ability (given by GOD) to know things not revealed to others, for he had had them seated at supper according to their ages.

Judah took over the role as spokesman for the brothers and admitted that they had no way to defend themselves against the charge made against them. The evidence had been seen by all of them. It is interesting that when they opened their bags for inspection, nothing was said about the return of their money. It was only the cup that mattered. Judah again stated what the brothers had told the steward. He said they were now all Joseph's servants (slaves).

Another interesting statement was made here: "GOD hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." This does not have reference to the cup which had been

"stolen," but rather to what they had done to Joseph twenty years before this time.

> "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Genesis 42:21).

Judah and his brothers were convinced that GOD was punishing them for what they had done to Joseph. In fact, there might have been a sigh of relief that this was all coming about. This writer remembers reading about a man who had been placed in prison but had escaped. For thirty years he had lived as a "free" man. Yet, he was not entirely free, for he was always looking over his shoulders for the law. When he was finally caught, he expressed relief, because he no longer constantly had to fear being arrested.

Again Joseph tested them by arranging that they could abandon their brother and go home. How would they respond to his words? Would they go home and protest to their father that they had done all they could to free Benjamin?

Gen. 44:18-23 "Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more."

> "Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother; and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more." (ASV)

This is basically a rehashing of what had taken place on their first visit to Egypt. Here it is plainly stated that they had told him that Benjamin's older brother was dead. Further, they had told him of his father's great love for Benjamin.

Gen. 44:24-29 "And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

> "And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, expect our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since: and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol." (ASV)

Again a repetition is made of the things already known. The one thing which stands out here is the reference to Israel's wife. Israel had three wives who bore him two sons each. It is to be remembered that Leah was his first wife, and these were but second wives. But there is no doubt that Israel was referring to Rachel, the one he favored above the others and treated as if she were his first wife.

Gen. 44:30-34 "Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on

my father."

> "Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it will come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come on my father." (ASV)

In this section of his speech, Judah came to the heart of the matter. Judah first stated that his father's life was bound up in Benjamin. Judah seemed to be saying that his father was so bound to Benjamin that they could not be separate. If Benjamin were to cease living, so would the father. Judah's care and concern for his father was very evident.

Second, he told Joseph that he had offered himself as surety to his father for Benjamin's safe return. Joseph was seeing the transformation in the lives of his brethren. Before, they had not been willing to relieve Israel's mourning by confessing their sin — they had at best been callous toward his feelings. Now they could not stand to see their father further hurt because they did not accept their responsibilitiy of caring for their younger brother.

Verse thirty shows a fully repentant Judah. Before, he had sold his brother into slavery without so much as a bat of the eye. Now he offered himself to become a slave in the service of Joseph if he will but let Benjamin go home. His love and self-sacrifice for his father's well-being is such a great lesson which seems to make him a type of Jesus. He was willing to die for his brother in order to please his father.

> "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).
>
> "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17).
>
> "Hereby perceive we the love of GOD, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

What does verse thirty-four show about Judah? *"This unselfish act indicated that Judah cared more for Benjamin and his father than he did for his life and freedom"* (Grasham, p. 486).

Genesis Chapter Forty-five

Gen. 45:1-3 "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence."

> "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood before him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence." (ASV)

This is the beginning of the development of a nation that could not have come if they did not move to Egypt. One remembers the account of Judah and Tamar in Genesis chapter thirty-eight. Many have wondered why it was given there. It was not simply to show how the lineage was developed, but rather to show that had they been left in the land, the children of Abraham would have mixed with the children of Canaan. The bloodline would have been diluted. But when the future Israelites were moved to Egypt, they occupied the part of the land known as Goshen. Why were they settled in the land of Goshen?

> "it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (Genesis 46:33-34).

Since the children of Abraham were shepherds by trade, the Egyptians would have disdained living by them, so they were assigned a part of the land where they would basically be separated from the Egyptians. Further, their future enslavement would further separate them. After all, who would want to marry a member of a slave class?

In this text, Joseph had seen and heard all he needed to know about his brothers' change. He ordered all of the Egyptians out of his presence and then announced himself to his brothers. What a shock

this must have been to his brothers. Consider also what a shock this must have been to those who served Joseph. Would their master be safe in the presence of these "heathen" people? Further, they heard their master crying, and it was so loud that they reported it to Pharaoh. What could all this mean?

In verse three, the request of a loving son was made — "Is my father still alive?" After revealing himself to them, his first concern was his father. How he must have yearned to see him. But his brothers could not answer him — "they were troubled at his presence."

> "troubled" — bahal — *"to tremble inwardly, be alarmed or agitated"* (Strong); *"to disturb, alarm, terrify, hurry, be disturbed, be anxious, be afraid, be hurried, be nervous"* (Thayer); *"to be terrified, frightened, perplexed; to be quick, overhasty; to flee; to frighten, confound, perplex, to accelerate, to do something hastily; to scare away; to terrify, panic, alarm"* (Zodhiates).

When one studies the definitions above and considers these brothers, he can understand their perplexity, trembling, and terror. Here was the brother they had mocked and sold into slavery. Here was the brother they had convinced themselves had been dead for awhile, not only living, but the second most powerful man in Egypt. Here was the man who with a word could enslave them, imprison them, or even have them executed. They were completely in his control. Would he now seek vengeance? As one looks ahead, when their father died, they thought then that he would seek vengeance, and he had to reassure them that he would not.

> "when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him" (Genesis 50:15).

Gen. 45:4-8 "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for GOD did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And GOD sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but GOD: and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the

land of Egypt."

> "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for GOD did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. And GOD sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but GOD: and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt." (ASV)

The brothers were stunned that they were standing before their brother. They were naturally afraid and probably feared revenge. But Joseph called them near and told them they should not worry or be sorrowful, neither should they fret about sending him to Egypt. They were not to punish themselves, berate themselves over what they had done. Joseph did not put blame upon his brothers' shoulders for sending him away. He told them this was GOD's plan, that GOD had sent him to Egypt to save their lives. How did GOD do this? Did He appear to Joseph and tell him to go to Egypt? No. GOD had caused Joseph to have dreams, which in his proud and boastful way he quickly revealed to his brothers and father. GOD knew the heart of Joseph and knew he would tell the dream and that his brothers would become even more jealous than they were already.

> *"Even though the brothers had been jealous of Joseph and had intended to get rid of him by selling him into bondage, God's higher purpose was to use him as an instrument of life and redemption"* (Grasham, p. 495).

In His providence, a group of merchant men came by, and Joseph was sold into slavery. The Ishmaalites could have sold Joseph anywhere along the route to Egypt, but GOD wanted him in Egypt. Joseph was sold as a slave who rose to prominence in Potiphar's house. But Joseph still needed to learn patience and humility, which came when Mrs. Potiphar tried to seduce him and he ended up in prison. In prison, GOD caused him to meet two of Pharaoh's servants who had dreams which, by GOD's revelation, he was able to interpret. Yet, he languished in prison until GOD sent dreams to Pharaoh which no one could interpret. The butler remembered his promise, GOD gave Joseph the meaning of the dreams and Joseph was promoted to second in power in Egypt. There is no doubt in this writer's mind that GOD caused the seven years of plenty and the seven

years of drought. GOD caused them to be in Egypt because they would have inter-married with the heathen and needed to be separated in a place where the people would despise the work they did and thus have little contact with them. They would need to go into captivity so that one day they would desire to leave the land of Egypt and return to Canaan — the land of milk and honey.

In his words to them, he informed them that there would be five more years of famine. He also told them that GOD had brought him here and made him a father to Pharaoh, i.e., an adviser to him. Everything in Egypt was under his control (lord and ruler). It must be stressed that Joseph continually referred to GOD as the one Who had done all of these things — credit to Whom credit is due.

Gen. 45:9-11 "Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, GOD hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty."

> "Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, GOD hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not; and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee; for there are yet five years of famine; lest thou come to poverty, thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast." (ASV)

The reunion at this point was probably quite brief, as indicated by the word "haste." He told his brothers to hurry back to his father and give him the good news. Not only was Joseph alive, but he was also second ruler in Egypt. He also gave them instructions to bring his father with all of their families to Egypt, where they would dwell in the land of Goshen and he would provide for them.

> *"Goshen, a fertile region in northeastern Egypt. The district was about nine hundred square miles in area, and would be ideal for their needs"* (Morris, p. 622).

His brothers were to tell their father that in Goshen he would be near to Joseph.

"It is believed in these days the Egyptian court

was held in Zoan or Tanis, perhaps twenty or twenty-five miles directly north of Goshen" (Leupold, p. 1095).

Gen. 45:12-15 "And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him."

> "And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him." (ASV)

By saying that it was his mouth that spoke to them, seems to be a way of saying, "Look, I am your brother, and part of the proof is that I am not speaking to you through an interpreter but in our native tongue." Further, when they spoke to Israel about Joseph, it would be as eyewitnesses. It was no second-hand information which might or might not be true. They saw him and heard him speak. This reminds one of the apostle John's declaration that they knew Jesus was raised from the dead and that He was the Son of GOD.

> "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).

Why did Joseph keep emphasizing that his brothers should tell their father the glorious position that he held? Had he slipped back into bragging? It should be remembered that Israel was quite aged and blind at this time. Further, this would not be an easy journey for any of them. Israel would probably have questions about where they would go and how would they live. Joseph

wanted his father to know that he had the power and authority to make everything all right for them.

Finally tears of joy abundantly flowed from Joseph. He and Benjamin wept on each other's shoulders, which suggests that they were clinging to each other. Tears and kisses were also given to the other brothers, but as Grasham points out, the text does not say that his other brothers were crying as well. From what has already been noticed in chapter fifty, they may have been suspicious. But there was no reason to fear, because Joseph had long before forgiven them.

The last thing noticed in verse fifteen is that the cat no longer had their tongues.

Gen. 45:16-20 "And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

> "And the report thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye: lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye: take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." (ASV)

These verses show the great gratitude that was felt by Pharaoh and all the Egyptians for Joseph. He had saved the nation, and in fact many of the people around him shared Pharaoh's gratitude.

News such as this traveled quickly to Pharaoh, who was very happy about it. Again, Joseph was highly regarded by Pharaoh, so as the context shows, he was willing to make Joseph as happy as he could. Pharaoh gave Joseph a command to send for his family and bring them to Egypt. He further decreed that Joseph's family would be given the "good" of the land.

"good" — <u>tub</u> — *"good, in the widest sense especially goodness, the beauty"* (Strong);

"goods, good things, goodness" (BDB); "It is goodness, beauty, excellence, cheerfulness, well–being; good things, the best things; goods, wealth, property; beauty; welfare, happiness; prosperity; fairness; graciousness" (Zodhiates).

"regard not your stuff" The word "regard" (chus) is interesting, because it carries the idea of pitying or having compassion upon something or someone. Being followed by the word "not," it shows that pity and compassion are not to be shown, in this case with regard to their "stuff."

"stuff" — keliy — *"something, any apparatus, vessel"* (Strong); *"article, vessel, implement, utensil"* (BDB); *"A masculine noun indicating an article, a vessel, an instrument, a jewel. It has a broad inclusive sense and indicates useful objects of all kinds"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 508).

The idea appears to be, *"Do not be concerned if you have to leave anything behind in order to come here. When you get here, everything you need will be supplied."* How generous of Pharaoh. And why not — if not for Joseph and his oversight during the years of plenty, there would have been nothing in Egypt.

Gen. 45:21-24 "And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way."

> "And the sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with grain and bread and provision for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way." (ASV)

The verses under consideration show that the brothers did what they were told to do. Further, the care Joseph showed for them and their families was exhibited. They were provided with wagons and food for the journey. His father had unknowingly sent a gift

for him. Now Joseph sent a greater gift to him. To his brothers he gave garments, possibly Egyptian garments of splendor for festive occasions. But Benjamin was special, so Joseph gave him five changes of garments and three hundred pieces of silver.

As Joseph sent them to get his father, he gave them one last bit of instruction: "See that ye fall not out by the way."

> "fall not out" — ragaz — *"A primitive root; to quiver (with any violent emotion, especially anger or fear"* (Strong); *"tremble, quake, rage, quiver, be agitated, be excited, be perturbed"* (BDB); *"The basic meaning is to shake with fear, anxiety, and anger"* (Zodhiates).

Today one would say, *"Do not have a falling out on your journey."*

> *"We do not know whether Joseph feared they might get into quarrels over their provisions or on the subject of their respective guilt in what had happened, or what. The book does not inform us"* (Zerr, Vol. 1, p. 98).

Joseph had forgiven them, but their guilty consciences probably had a hard time believing that someone they had treated so badly would forgive them. Further, telling their father that Joseph was still alive would necessitate telling their father what they had done. There is no record of their begging for forgiveness for deceiving him, but surely they must have.

Gen. 45:25-28 "And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

> "And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. And his heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." (ASV)

When the brothers arrived home, they told Israel about Joseph — he did not believe them. The Bible

says "Jacob's heart fainted." This is not talking about his blood-pump.

> "fainted" — pug — *"A primitive root; to be **sluggish**"* (Strong); *"to grow numb, be feeble, be benumbed"* (BDB); *"A verb meaning to be stunned, to be paralyzed, to be feeble. It indicates a response of great surprise or astonishment about something; or a condition brought on by severe illness"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 891).

Israel's mind simply could not absorb this information, for he had mourned for the son he thought was dead for two decades.

He was finally convinced by the multitude of gifts and provisions sent by Joseph. No doubt his heart was now full of joy.

It is of interest that the details of how Israel reacted to his guilty sons is not revealed. Neither is any detail given of what followed during their journey to Egypt. The fact is that they are not germane to the entire account, and thus one's curiosity cannot be satisfied.

This writer cannot help but wonder how GOD would have brought them into Egypt if not for the favoritism and jealousy which developed in this family. One thing is for sure — they would have gone into captivity, just as GOD had promised Abraham.

Genesis Chapter Forty-six

Gen. 46:1-4 "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the GOD of his father Isaac. And GOD spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am GOD, the GOD of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

> "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the GOD of his father Isaac. And GOD spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am GOD, the GOD of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." (ASV)

When Jacob fled from his brother, GOD met him at Bethel and gave him assurance (Genesis 28). When it was time for him to leave Laban and go home, GOD

told him to go (Genesis 31). When there was trouble at Shechem, GOD comforted him (Genesis 35). (Further, he no doubt knew of the trouble Abraham had had in Egypt (Genesis 12). But no word had come to him regarding Joseph's call for him to go to Egypt. Consider also that he knew the promise made to Abraham that Canaan would be their homeland someday. Yet, he left this land to go to Egypt.

When they came to Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to GOD. It was not too late to turn back, for this was the southern extremity of the land which had been promised to Abraham. GOD spoke to him in "visions of the night." Is this speaking of dreams? The original gives no help in determining if these visions were done through dreams or in some other fashion. Note that when GOD called his name, Jacob quickly answered "Here am I." He was ready to listen to GOD and do whatever GOD directed him to do. Great men of GOD have always been ready to obey GOD when He called. This should also be the case with every Christian who has been called into the service of the Lord.

GOD gave assurance to Jacob by identifying Himself as the GOD of Isaac. In essence, GOD then told Jacob to go down to Egypt. He also made him four promises: (1) I will make you a great nation there, (2) I am going with you, thus signifying His favor and protection, (3) You will come out of Egypt (eventually), and (4) Joseph will put his hands on your eyes. Note the four promises individually.

"I will there make of thee a great nation" Why did GOD not make them the great nation while they were in Canaan? Why was it necessary to go to Egypt to be made this nation? Both the land of Canaan and Egypt were full of people who worshipped many gods. In fact, it would be hard to determine which was worse in this regard. The answer to the above questions lies in the fact, as already discussed, that in Egypt they would be isolated from the inhabitants of the land and their gods. Basically, the people of Egypt left them to themselves and shunned them because they were shepherds, which was an abomination to an Egyptian.

"I will go down with thee into Egypt" This phrase shows that GOD approved of the move being made. Jacob was not acting contrary to GOD's will. In fact, by moving his family there, he was accomplishing His will. Further, GOD's being with Jacob assured him of being protected by GOD.

"I will also surely bring thee up again" This is a general statement which was not directed to Jacob individually, but rather it was a promise to bring all of

GOD's nation out of Egypt. By necessity, GOD was promising to bring them back to the land of Canaan as a mighty nation.

"Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" This last promise was a very personal one. Joseph would be with him when he died and close his eyes. With this said, let one be reminded of the promise made to Abraham.

> "He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15:13-16).

Gen. 46:5-7 "And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt."

> "And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons's daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt." (ASV)

The passage under consideration simply tells of Jacob's journey to Egypt with all of his family and everything they owned. The one new, or may one say, confirmed thing is that Jacob appears to have other daughters besides Dinah (v. 7). One could also say this could have reference to his daughters-in-law.

Gen. 46:8-27 "And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish

woman. And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls. The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. And the sons of Dan; Hushim. And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."

"And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's first-born. And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, and Pallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Puvah, and Iob, and Shimron. And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. These are the sons of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. And the sons of Gad: Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. And the sons of Asher: Imnah, and Ishvah, and Ishvi, and Beriah, and Serah their sister; and the sons of Beriah:

Heber, and Malchiel. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls. The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On, bare unto him. And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. And the sons of Dan: Hushim. And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." (ASV)

This is a list of the progeny of Jacob, who all went down to Egypt. The one thing which stands out to this writer is that there was the beginning of marriages outside of the family, i.e., Canaanites (Genesis 46:10). With regard to marriage with Canaanites, one should also remind himself of Judah's marriage to a Canaanite.

"The number seventy seems to have been associated in a peculiar way with the nation of Israel ever since the time when seventy apparently became the founders of the nation. (1) Seventy nations of the world are listed in Genesis 10. (2) Seventy elders are mentioned in Numbers 11:16. (3) Seventy years of captivity in Babylon were the punishment of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:21). (4) Seventy weeks were determined for Israel in which to finish the transgression (Daniel 9:24). (5) Seventy translators produced the Septuagint. (6) The Sanhedrin was composed of seventy members. (7) Jesus Christ Himself sent out the seventy witnesses of His kingdom. (8) The days of our years are three score and ten (Psalm 90:10)" (Coffman, p. 538).

There is one other consideration which should be noticed. The present text states that the number of Jacob's descendants was seventy, but in Acts 7:14-15, Luke records that there were seventy-five. The answer to this is that Luke quoted from the Septuagint version, which is quoted below.

"And there were sons born to Joseph in the land of Egypt, whom Aseneth, the daughter of Petephres, priest of Heliopolis, bore to him, even

Manasses, which the Syrian concubine bore to him, even Machir. And Machir begot Manasses; Sutalaam, and Taam. And the sons of Sutalaam; Edom" (Grasham, p. 518).

Gen. 46:28 "And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen."

> "And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to show the way before him unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen." (ASV)

There is little doubt that what is found here is Judah's being sent to Joseph in order to gain directions to the part of Goshen where the children of Israel would live. Judah's being sent to Joseph served to let him know that his family had finally arrived.

Gen. 46:29-30 "And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

> "And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and he presented himself unto him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive." (ASV)

Upon hearing that his father had arrived in Goshen, Joseph made ready his chariot and went to him. When Joseph arrived, it seems that Joseph and Israel simply embraced and wept for a long time. For approximately twenty-two years, Israel had thought Joseph was dead and now he was in his arms. It was almost as if they were refusing to let each other go, lest they never see one another again.

"Now let me die" Israel was not wishing to die right then. In Genesis 47:28 it is learned that Israel lived for seventeen years in Egypt. The meaning of verse thirty seems to be that Israel felt he could now go to his grave in peace whenever that time arrived.

Gen. 46:31-34 "And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their

herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians."

> "And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and tell Pharaoh, and will say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? that ye shall say, Thy servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." (ASV)

It would seem that even though Pharaoh knew Joseph's family was coming and had even helped arrange for their coming, he did not know what their occupation was. Joseph had evidently planned that they would live in Goshen, where they would be separated away from the general populations of Egyptians. Consider that in Canaan, they were not despised by their neighbors because they too were shepherds. Because of that, there had been some intermingling, and this was dangerous as was seen in the episode of Judah's marrying outside of the lineage. By settling in Goshen, they would be separated from the Egyptians, because the Egyptians despised shepherds.

> "abomination" — toebah toebah — *"Properly something disgusting...an abhorrence"* (Strong); *"A disgusting thing, abomination, abominable"* (BDB); *"It is something which is morally disgusting, an abomination, an abominable thing (e.g., for Egyptians to eat with Hebrews)"* (Zodhiates).

Since the Egyptians could not stand shepherds, Joseph knew his brethren would be left alone, so he emphasized that, when they were introduced to Pharaoh, they were to claim their heritage as shepherds.

Genesis — Chapter Forty-seven

Gen. 47:1-4 "Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and

their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

> "Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And from among his brethren he took five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and our fathers. And they said unto Pharaoh, To sojourn in the land are we come; for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen." (ASV)

It is noted that, in the previous chapter, Joseph anticipated how Pharaoh would approach his brethren, and so he coached them in how to answer him. It is also remembered that, when Joseph found out about his family, Pharaoh told him to go get them and bring them into the land.

Joseph's family was now in the land, so Joseph announced their presence to Pharaoh. He also noted that they were presently in the land of Goshen. When Joseph went to Pharaoh to announce the arrival of his family, he also took with him five of his brethren. Some have thought it was probably his five oldest brothers and others have thought it might have been his five youngest brothers. The text simply does not reveal who he took with him.

It is possible, maybe even probable, that Pharaoh asked them a number of questions. But the one revealed, and the most important one for GOD's plan, was the question of their occupation. In review, one is reminded that shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians, so it would be better for them to live apart from the general population. Second, and most important, GOD's plan is to develop a distinct and separate people. This could not have been done in the more populated areas, where proximity to the people would have offered too many temptations for compromise.

Being a good ruler, and wanting the best for Joseph's family and his people, Pharaoh needed to decide where they would best fit into the economy of the nation. Thus, their revelation about their occupation and their request would make perfect sense to him. They told Pharaoh that their families for generations had been shepherds. Second, they pointed out that they only intended to be sojourners in the land. They were telling Pharaoh that they did not come to become permanent settlers in the land. Since the Egyptians tended to be very suspicious of outsiders, this would have pleased the ears of Pharaoh. Third, they gave as their reason for leaving their homeland that it was an absolute necessity which drove them to Egypt. There was not enough food for the flocks because of the famine. Fourth, they pleaded that Pharaoh might allow them to live in the land of Goshen. It is true that they were already dwelling in Goshen and that Pharaoh had previously told Joseph to give them the best of the land. Pasture land would not have been considered the best land by the Egyptians, because of their views of shepherds. But this was the best land for them to fulfill GOD's purpose for them, and it was great land for flocks. By asking permission from Pharaoh to dwell in Goshen, it made it easy for him to assign that place to them.

Gen. 47:5-6 "And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle."

> "And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any able men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle." (ASV)

Today one might have said it this way, *"Your family can live anywhere it wants to, but since it is Goshen they have asked for, Goshen it is."* Pharaoh also offered to hire any of Joseph's men who had a talent for caring for cattle and who were so disposed to labor in that field. The Egyptians may have loathed shepherds, but herdsmen were a different matter, since Egyptian inscriptions show that it was not unusual for Pharaohs to have large numbers of cattle (Grasham, p. 529).

"Later records show that Rameses III had 3,264

men, most of whom were foreigners, employed to guard and care for his cattle" (Sarna, p.319).

Gen. 47:7-10 "And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh."

> "And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh." (ASV)

The first thing noticed in these verses is the attitude exhibited by Jacob toward Pharaoh. He blessed him. This probably was a call upon GOD to bless this man. This is a far cry from what is often seen today. The Bible calls for us to pray for our rulers — no matter who they may be.

> "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

In fact, to speak evil of a ruler (President, Prime Minister, King, etc.) is to speak evil of GOD, for it is He who puts them in the position they hold.

> "Counsel is Mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Proverbs 8:14-16).

> "He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (Daniel 2:21).

One may not particularly care for one who rules over him, may not like his politics and policies, but he must pray for him. It is inconceivable to serve the GOD of

Heaven and pray for harm to come to any man, or to wish evil upon him.

> "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people" (Exodus 22:28).

Note that one does not even "revile" [qalal — *"to make light...to treat with contempt, bring contempt or dishonor"* (BDB)], the "gods" (little "g").

> "Revilest thou GOD's High Priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people" (Acts 23:4-5).

Here was Pharaoh, the ruler of a pagan society, a worshiper of many gods, and even considered himself a god — but Jacob showed him respect as a ruler and desired blessings for him.

Pharaoh asked Jacob how old he was. It must have been apparent to Pharaoh that he was quite advanced in age. Jacob answered that he had lived 130 years. Yet, he called the time he had lived on earth a few days. It might be remembered that Abraham lived 175 years and Isaac lived 180 years. Jacob further indicated that he had seen much evil in his life.

> "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1).

Note should also be made that Jacob viewed himself as a pilgrim in this world. This world was not his home. He was "just a-passing through," **and he knew it.**

> Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD...These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" (Hebrews 11:10, 13-14).

Gen. 47:11-12 "And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families."

> "And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families." (ASV)

Joseph settled his family into the land of Goshen, which here is also called the land of Rameses. There have been questions about the identification of this land as the land of Rameses. Was this land known as Rameses long before the birth of Rameses? If so, then it would appear that his family was a powerful political family long before he came to the throne. It is believed by Leupold that the exodus took place about 1449 B.C., and that Rameses II began ruling about 1300 B.C. It seems the answer might be that the name was being used here because, though not known by this name during the time of Joseph, it was known by that name by the time GOD commissioned this account through Moses. It might be added here that the name Rameses means *"son of the sun."*

> *"Goshen is the name of the area in general while Rameses is the name of a more central part of the land"* (Zerr, p. 100).

The land of Goshen would have been in the area referred to today as the delta of the Nile as it flows into the Mediterranean Sea.

From everything which has been noticed so far, it appears obvious that a rationing system was in use. The food stored in granaries had to last the length of the famine, and the Israelites were not exempt. But Joseph fulfilled his promise to care for his family, so they received their portion. Each family received food according to the number of children found in their home.

> "families" — taph — *"children, little children, little ones"* (BDB); *"It means children, especially little ones. Presumably, the term came from the brisk, tripping gait, or short steps, of little children"* (Zodhiates).

Gen. 47:13-14 "And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house."

> "And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house." (ASV)

One of the things which should not be overlooked is that a national sales tax is seen in Egypt. The amount set by GOD was 20%. Remember that the plan set in

action had been given to Joseph by GOD. In comparison, one might consider that in America, "tax freedom day" comes on April 19, 2018.

> *"Americans will collectively spend more on taxes in 2018 than they will on food, clothing, and housing combined"* (Tax Foundation, Google search).

Why did Joseph not simply give the people the food? After all, it had been collected by the government for the specific goal of having food during this famine. Giving them the food would have made them reliant on the government and would have created a indolent people.

> "indolent" — *"averse to activity, effort, or movement : habitually lazy"* (Webster).

After the famine was over, if the government had simply provided for them, they would not have known how to work and would have expected the government to continue providing for them (welfare society in America). On the other hand, GOD has also required man to labor for his food from the time of Adam and Eve's being commanded to "keep" the garden.

> "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that **if any would not work**, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10, emphasis mine, RK).

Welfare societies were never in GOD's plan, because they strip man of his dignity and make him a slave to other men and their governments.

Soon the people would run out of money, because they were not able to make a living off the land. As they paid for their food, the money collected was put in Pharaoh's hands — his treasury. Looking ahead, it would not be long until Pharaoh owned everything in the land.

Gen. 47:15-17 "And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year."

> "And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for our money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money

fail. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year." (ASV)

Their money had been depleted; they had no more with which to buy food. What could they do? Joseph provided a solution — "Sell your animals and livestock to me and I will give you food in exchange." At first glance, this may sound heartless. Was Joseph trying to make slaves out of the population? Or was Joseph trying to preserve the animals? What if Joseph had not bartered for their animals? Does it not make sense that they would have eventually killed all of them for food? Then when the famine was over, what would they do for animals to work the land, to grow new crops?

The king had all of the grain necessary to preserve not only the people's lives, but also the lives of the animals of the land. What he did was an act of mercy. Further, in looking ahead, when the famine was over, they were provided grain to plant (vv. 23-24). Does it not also seem reasonable that the animals they needed for harvest, et cetera, were then supplied to them as well? Grasham offers the following thoughtful comments which this writer believes are worthy of contemplation.

> *"Instead of selling and leaving all of the animals with the king at the capital, the text could mean that, under Joseph's auspices, those in need mortgaged their livestock to Pharaoh and agreed to make payments on them after the famine was over. In the meantime, they were able to retain the use of them for the well-being of their families"* (Vol. 2, p. 535).

Gen. 47:18-19 "When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate."

"And when that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide from my lord, how that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord's; there is nought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: wherefore should we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and

our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land be not desolate." (ASV)

After another year passed they no longer had any animals to offer for food. What did they have left of value? Themselves and their land. It is worth noting that Joseph did not ask them to sell their land, nor did he offer to make them slaves — they voluntarily offered to sell their land and themselves to Pharaoh. Desperate times call for desperate measures. They knew the famine would some day be over — what then? They offered to work for Pharaoh. Joseph would provide them with their needs under the condition that, when the harvests came again, they would give 20% of their increase to Pharaoh. Again, was this Joseph's plan, or did he receive instructions from GOD? It is this author's conviction that GOD is showing that a government only needs 20% taxes to efficiently do its job. But, then again, what does this author know? Also consider that Pharaoh was providing their food until the famine was over — yet he only took 20%. The stakes were high — without food they would die.

Concerning their desire for seed, this writer believes this was a request for seed to plant the fields after the famine ended. To have seed and plant it while the famine was in progress would have been an empty and fruitless proposition.

What is the "second year" mentioned here? It was not the second year of the famine. These events happened after Joseph's family moved to Egypt, and they did not arrive until the third year of the famine. It would seem that this is the second year after using all their money for food. Some believe it is possible that this was the beginning of the last year of the famine.

Gen. 47: 20-26 "And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your

own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's."

> "So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was sore upon them: and the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their land. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings, that ye shall give a fifth unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests alone became not Pharaoh's." (ASV)

All the land and the people were bought by Pharaoh. Joseph then made an adjustment regarding where the people lived. For convenience sake, they needed to be close to the grain until the famine was over; therefore, he moved them to the cities.

An exception is noted with regard to all the land and people belonging to Pharaoh. The religious leaders of the land did not lose their land nor have to indenture themselves to Pharaoh. They were supported by Pharaoh himself and supported as a state religion.

Joseph stated that he bought them, but this is to be understood of doing so by the authority of Pharaoh. The land did not belong to Joseph. The people did not belong to Joseph. It is observed in the context that everything Joseph did was for Pharaoh. He did not do anything for himself. He did not try to enrich himself or gain power. Because of this, it is evident that the people loved him and recognized that all he did was for their welfare. In accepting their offer, he gave them the seed they needed to plant crops and placed on them an annual tax of 20%. Considering that they did not have to pay a mortgage or rent money, because Pharaoh owned the land, 20% annual tax was really quite decent. Note that they were to keep 80%, which was to

be used "for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones" (v. 24). Consider that, if this were the situation in America, not only would the tax burden be very light, but there would be an abundance for everyone. Personally, it is probably very evident that this writer is in favor of taxation based on GOD's plan.

Verse twenty-five shows that, rather than being hated, Joseph was obviously loved and respected. He had done nothing for personal gain and all to save the people. At least until the time of Moses, this taxation was used in Egypt, and the people became very rich. This is evident when one looks ahead and sees all the riches the Egyptian people gave them to leave Egypt.

> *"When the misery (famine) ceased, Joseph came to every city, and gathered together the people belonging thereto, and gave them back entirely their lands, exhorting them to fall to their husbandry with cheerfulness, and to pay back to the king a fifth part. The men rejoiced at thus becoming unexpectedly the possessors of their lands and cheerfully did what was enjoined them"* (Josephus, quoted by Coffman, p. 551).

Gen. 47:27-28 "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years."

> "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they gat them possessions therein, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred forty and seven years." (ASV)

The remaining verses of this chapter appear to be a summary of events, primarily surrounding Jacob's death. Verse twenty-seven seems to go well beyond the time Jacob spent in Egypt to show that they grew in very large numbers. From seventy souls who entered Egypt they would grow to over two million by the time they left Egypt. It must also be remembered that every attempt was made by later Pharaoh's to destroy their numbers, yet they grew to great numbers with over six hundred thousand fighting men by the time they left.

Jacob was able to enjoy being near his beloved Joseph for seventeen years after entering Egypt. But finally the time of his sojourn on this planet came to an end. He died at one hundred forty seven years of age.

Gen. 47:29-31 "And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."

> "And the time drew near that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me: bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; but when I sleep with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me: and he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." (ASV)

> *"One only of his dying arrangements is recorded; but that one reveals his whole character. It was the disposal of his remains, which were to be carried to Canaan, not from a mere romantic attachment to his native soil, nor, like his modern descendants, from a superstitious feeling for the soil of the Holy Land, but from faith in the promises"* (JFB, p. 262).

"thy hand under my thigh" This is the same action Abraham took when taking a pledge from his servant when he sent him to the house of his fathers to get a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24). Cozort observes that this is basically the same action one takes today when he raises his right hand in taking an oath.

"bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers" Jacob wanted to be buried in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 23 & 25) alongside Abraham and Isaac. This was not a sentimental desire, but rather an acknowledgment of his belief in the fulfillment of GOD's promises to them.

> "Israel bowed himself" — shachah — *"to depress, i.e., prostrate (especially reflexively in homage to royalty or God"* (Strong); *"to bow down, prostrate oneself"* (BDB); "to depress; to prostrate oneself (in homage to royalty or to God)...Shachah was not used in the general sense of worship, but specifically to bow down, to prostrate oneself as an act of respect before a superior being" (Zodhiates).

As seen from the definitions of the word shachah, this word can refer to either a human being or to GOD.

It is this writer's belief that here it has reference to one engaged in worship to GOD.

"the bed's head" Beds in those times were not like what one envisions today. Having traveled much in the East, this writer saw the beds (and has slept on them) of this text as mats laid on the floor or, at best, mats raised only a few inches off the floor on slight framework.

> *"We note in passing that the LXX version of the last phrase here is, 'Leaning upon the top of his staff' and is thus quoted in Hebrews 11:21"* (Coffman, p. 551).

Genesis Chapter Forty-eight

Gen. 48:1-2 "And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed."

> "And it came to pass after these things, that one said to Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." (ASV)

There is a gap between chapters forty-seven and forty-eight. The time period between these chapters is unknown. In chapter forty-seven, Israel (Jacob) took an oath from Joseph so as to be buried in Canaan. In this chapter, Joseph was summoned because his father was dying. It is noted that Jacob does not appear to be the one who informed Joseph of his condition. Someone sent a message to Joseph, probably what one often hears today when it is perceived that a loved one is dying — *"If you want to see Jacob alive again, you better come quickly."*

One might wonder why Joseph brought his two sons with him. The answer would be that these two sons were about to be adopted by Jacob, and then given full inheritance as his sons. Each would become the head of one of the land-tribes of Israel. Thus, Joseph received the double portion of inheritance, reserved normally for the firstborn, through his sons. Possibly, Jacob had revealed this to Joseph in a conversation in the past. It should also be pointed out that Joseph's sons would now be in their early twenties (at the least), having been born during the seven years of plenty.

The Hebrew word for "sick" can also be translated

as "weak." Jacob's life forces were slipping away, but when he heard that Joseph was coming, he called upon his reserves of strength and sat up on the bed to receive his son.

Gen. 48:3-4 "And Jacob said unto Joseph, GOD Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession."

> "And Jacob said unto Joseph, GOD Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a company of peoples, and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession." (ASV)

Jacob rehearsed the promise that GOD had made to him. Joseph had probably heard these things before, but it never ceases to benefit man to hear GOD's message repeated. Jacob said that GOD gave him this blessing at Luz, which is better known to Bible students as Bethel.

GOD had appeared to Jacob at Bethel on at least two occasions. The first is found in Genesis 28, where the Bible student will remember that GOD appeared when he was fleeing from his brother to the land of Haran. On that occasion, GOD promised that He would give that land to Jacob's descendants. GOD also informed him that He would be with him wherever he went, i.e., protect him. The second time GOD appeared to Jacob is the one considered in the present context (Genesis 35). Jacob seems to be reminding Joseph (and probably his brothers) that Egypt was not the homeland that GOD promised to them — Canaan was where the land promise was to be fulfilled.

Gen. 48:5-7 "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem."

> "And now thy two sons, who were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine;

Ephraim and Manasseh, even as Reuben and Simeon, shall be mine. And thy issue, that thou begettest after them, shall be thine; they shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still some distance to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem)." (ASV)

Under normal circumstances, the double portion of the firstborn would have gone to Reuben and his descendants. But Reuben had shown himself unworthy of such recognition and leadership.

"Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright" (1 Chronicles 5:1).

Joseph would receive the double portion through his sons. It could be pointed out that Jacob never intended to have any other wife than Rachel. If that had been the case, then Joseph would have been the firstborn.

Jacob now declared that Ephraim and Manasseh were no longer reckoned as the sons of Joseph, but now would be considered his sons. They were to be on an equal plane with all of his other sons. This would make Jacob the father of thirteen sons, who would become the heads of the thirteen tribes of the nation of Israel [twelve land tribes and one tribe of the priests (Levi)]. This provides testimony to future generations as to how the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh came into existence.

The next thing of note concerns the future sons (if any) which Joseph might have. These would become members of either the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh.

Jacob then reminded Joseph of the death of his mother. Why? In GOD's plan, it would take thirteen sons to make the thirteen tribes of Israel. When Rachel died, there were only twelve sons. The connection is that, in order to meet the requirements of GOD, Jacob had to have another son, and this was remedied by his adopting the two sons of Joseph. **In a sense**, Joseph would become the head of two tribes through his sons.

Gen. 48:8-11 "And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom GOD hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them

near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, GOD hath shewed me also thy seed."

> "And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom GOD hath given me here. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, GOD hath let me see thy seed also." (ASV)

The covenant name of Jacob (Israel) will now be used until the end of the book. But in these verses, a problem exists. How could Israel see Joseph's sons when he was blind? Perhaps the answer is in the word "dim." This author is legally blind in one eye, yet that eye sees shadows and can tell that there is an object on that side of him, but he cannot see clearly what the object is or how far it is from him. It may be that Israel could tell that someone had come to him with Joseph, but had no idea who they were. In that way, he saw them — but he did not see them.

It should also be observed here that Joseph credited these sons as being a blessing which GOD had given him.

> "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm 127:3).

> "he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which GOD hath graciously given thy servant" (Genesis 33:5).

Upon being told that these were Joseph's sons, he said they should be brought to him. Whereupon he hugged and kissed them. Verse eleven shows one why he did this. He was overcome with joy and thanksgiving for the favor GOD had shown him. After his sons had deceived him, he had never thought he would see his favored son again. Yet, now he was in his presence **and** the presence of Joseph's sons.

Gen. 48:12-14 "And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right

hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn."

> "And Joseph brought them out from between his knees; and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born." (ASV)

The term "from between his knees" seems to indicate a position between Joseph and Jacob, i.e., the boys had been standing between Joseph and Jacob. The custom for a blessing appears to be to place the hands on one (possibly his head) in order to pronounce a blessing. In a case such as this, the right hand would normally go on the head of the older son and the left on the younger. So Joseph arranged his sons so that when he brought them to Jacob, and Ephraim would have been in front of his left hand.

But Jacob crossed his hands so that his right hand was upon Ephraim and his left upon Manasseh. There are two possibilities as to how Jacob knew which was which. (1) He anticipated that Joseph would arrange them as he did, or (2) GOD guided his hands. This writer accepts the second possibility as the answer. No doubt GOD revealed to Jacob that Ephraim would become the more influential one of the two. Later, it is seen that the name "Ephraim" was sometimes used to signify the nation itself. Jacob knew exactly what he was doing.

> *"This is the first example in the Bible of the laying on of hands in the act of blessing or the conveyance of a gift. Afterwards, it was extensively employed (1) in the dedication of the priests (Deuteronomy 29:9), (2) in the ordination of Christian servants (Acts 6:6), (3) by the Savior and his apostles in the performance of miracles (Matthew 19:13), (4) in the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 17, 18), etc."* (Coffman, p. 557).

Consider also that once a blessing was given, it could not be recalled. Note that unlike his father, Jacob made sure to whom he was giving the blessing by asking earlier who these people were. He had tricked his blind father, but he was not going to be tricked in the same way.

Gen. 48:15-16 "And he blessed Joseph, and said, GOD, before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the GOD which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

> "And he blessed Joseph, and said, The GOD before Whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the GOD Who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." (ASV)

The blessing began with the identification of GOD's being the same GOD his fathers served. This is the GOD who not only provided their daily needs but provided his as well. There is a recognition that GOD always cared for him, even though it may not have appeared so at the time.

"fed" — raah — *"to tend a (flock), i.e., pasture it"* (Strong); *"to pasture, tend, graze, feed"* (BDB); *"A verb meaning to feed, to tend; to be a shepherd. In means in general to care for, to protect, to graze, to feed flocks and herds"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1065).

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Being a shepherd calls for tender care of the sheep by the shepherd. Indeed, GOD gives tender care to all His sheep.

"The Angel which redeemed me" It is to be noted that the word "Angel" is capitalized, giving it the significance that he was speaking of deity. What did deity do? "redeemed" him.

"redeemed" — gaal — *"to redeem (according to the Oriental law of kinship), i.e., to be the next of kin (and as such to buy back a relative's property, marry his widow, etc.)"* (Strong); *"to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman"* (BDB); *"to redeem, to ransom, release, deliver; to fulfill the duties of relationship, to marry a childless widow of an older brother. The Qal part. form means redeemer, avenger, kinsman–helper. The main idea is that of buying*

back something" (Zodhiates); *"A verb meaning to redeem or act as a kinsman-redeemer. The word means to act as a redeemer for a deceased kinsman; to redeem or buy back from bondage; to redeem or buy back a kinsman's possessions; to avenge a kinsman's murder; to redeem an object through a payment. Theologically, this word is used to convey God's redemption of individuals from spiritual death and His redemption of the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage and also from exile"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 176).

GOD protected Jacob.

In blessing Joseph's sons, he was also blessing the one who bore those sons. The honor of the family seems to be what is spoken of here. It is an honorable family in the eyes of GOD, one that is involved in bringing GOD's plan to fruition. His desire is that they will grow into a vast family within the family of Israel.

It should be considered that the blesings Jacob was invoking at this time were general blessings. He has not gotten to the point of pronouncing the individual blessings as yet. This is where Joseph will object to whom Jacob intends on giving the greater blessing. Joseph believes the older should receive the greater blessing, per tradition.

Gen. 48:17-19 "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations."

> "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: howbeit his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." (ASV)

"It is worth noting again how often God bypassed the oldest son in favor of a younger: Isaac

instead of Ishmael, Jacob instead of Esau, Joseph instead of Reuben, and now Ephraim instead of Manasseh. The rule is not invariable, of course. The point is that God's choice is for spiritual reasons, not chronological" (Morris, p. 649).

It is pretty obvious that Joseph thought Jacob had made a mistake and that he was about to give a blessing to Ephraim which he thought should go to Manasseh. But when he tried to change Jacob's hands, Jacob let him know that he knew what he was doing.

Jacob let Joseph know that Manasseh would become a people, but that Ephraim would become greater than his brother. This is fulfilled when one looks down the road and sees Ephraim as apparently the strongest tribe in northern Israel, when the tribes split into two nations.

"Ephraim's house led the rebellion against Rehoboam following the death of Solomon, and also took the leading part upon numerous occasions in the history of Israel. So completely was the Northern Israel identified with Ephraim, that the whole nation came to be called, in time, Ephraim, that name being used for Israel dozens of times in the prophecy of Hosea" (Coffman, p. 559).

Gen. 48:20-22 "And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, GOD make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but GOD shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

> "And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee will Israel bless, saying, GOD make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but GOD will be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." (ASV)

Now the individual blessings of these grandsons is formally spoken in that Ephraim will be greater than his brother. But another general blessing is given, in that when the people of Israel wish to express a blessing regarding growth, they will invoke the names of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Next Jacob confirmed his trust and faith in GOD and in the promises He made, not only to himself, but also to his sons, that they would return to occupy the land of Canaan. This is again confirming that Egypt was not the land GOD would give them.

Verse twenty-two has puzzled commentators for ages, for it speaks of a conquest by Jacob over the Amorites. There is no account of Jacob's ever going to war other than this very brief mention. This event is not recorded in the rest of the Old Testament. This writer prefers to let it rest. Since GOD said it happened, then it happened.

Genesis Chapter Forty-nine

Gen. 49:1 "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father."

> "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said: gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days. Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; And hearken unto Israel your father." (ASV)

"last" — achariyth — *"the last or (end) hence the future"* (Strong); *"after part, end"* (BDB); *"The general meaning is: 'after,' 'later,' 'behind,' 'following.' The Hebrew way of thinking was like a man rowing a boat; he backs into the future. Therefore, what is 'behind' and what is 'future' come from the same root: 'achar."* (Zodhiates).

Jacob was dying, so he called his sons to him to reveal what the future would bring. This was not what he personally desired for them. Rather, GOD was revealing through him what the future held in store for their generations. It was not that these things might happen. They **would** come to pass just as predicted, because they came from GOD's mouth. Jacob was acting as an inspired prophet.

Some have tried to make the word "last" apply to the end times, i.e., the Christian dispensation. But when one observes the word GOD used here, he discovers that it refers only to what is going to happen in the future. It would be more in accord with the original word for the phrase "in the last days" to be translated *"in the future."*

What will follow are blessings which will be spoken about his sons. This can be very confusing (since

some of what he states will be curses) unless one considers the Hebrew word for "bless." "Bless" (barak) is used in the Old Testament to describe either great blessings or curses. The context determines which way this word was being used. The blessings spoken at this time are going to be specific to each son — not general for all of them.

> *"Jacob's final blessings were of great significance to his sons because they contained bad news (curses) for some of them and good news (positive blessings) for others, depending on each one's attitude and character"* (Grasham, p. 573).

One final note on verse two. "Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." He called them the "sons of Jacob" and then tells them to listen to "Israel your father." The covenant name of "Israel" was used — what he was about to say was by the name (authority) of GOD's chosen servant — Israel.

Gen. 49:3-4 "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch."

> "Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength; The pre-eminence of dignity, and the pre-eminence of power. Boiling over as water, thou shalt not have the pre-eminence; Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; Then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." (ASV)

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, as might be expected, is the first one given a "blessing." He began by stating that Reuben was the beginning of his strength. This refers to the fact that there would be a number of sons born into the family which would grow and become a great nation. As the firstborn, he normally would have received the double-portion, which included leadership, the priestly function during patriarchal times, and the kingdom. Instead, he was cursed, and his descendants never produced a great leader (ruler), nor a judge, nor a prophet, nor a spiritual leader. Further, after the rebellion of the ten northern tribes and their adventures in idolatry, the tribe of (Reuben as well as the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh) was the first to be taken into Assyrian captivity.

> "the GOD of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king

of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day" (1 Chronicles 5:26).

In the time of Moses, one finds him praying that this tribe might continue, i.e., not die out.

"Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few" (Deuteronomy 33:6).

Why did these things befall Reuben and his generations? Because he violated his father's bed.

"it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it" (Genesis 35:22).

Reuben simply did not turn out as every father hopes his first son to be. He is called "unstable as water."

"unstable" — pahaz — *"recklessness, wantonness, unbridled license, frothiness"* (BDB); *"A masculine noun referring, uncontrollableness. It refers to persons who are without self-control or discipline so they are unstable and cannot be counted on"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 896); *"lust, frivolity and insolent pride"* (Keil, p. 389).

This unstableness is seen during the times of Deborah and Barak. Amalek was troubling the land, and yet Reuben sent no troops to help his brethren defeat them (Judges 5:14, 15-16).

Gen. 49:5-7 "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

"Simeon and Levi are brethren; Weapons of violence are their swords. O my soul, come not thou into their council; Unto their assembly, my glory, be not thou united; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hocked an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; And their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel." (ASV)

By tying these two brothers together, Jacob was saying that their personalities and temperament were alike. The sentence "instruments of cruelty are in their habitations" is translated *"Weapons of violence are their swords"* in the (ASV). The LXX translates it *"they*

executed in concert their iniquitous plot of destruction." Another way of saying this is that they had a violent and destructive nature. Their violence and anger had been shown at Shechem, when they killed the men and took their wives and children, as well as their livestock. Jacob did not want his honor to fall within the circle of their influence. He did not want his name associated with what they had done; for what they had done was not honorable.

Jacob "cursed" their "anger" and "wrath." It was appropriate that they should have been angry over Shechem's raping their sister (Dinah). But they allowed their anger to lead them into sinning.

> "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

It was not appropriate for them to kill the men nor steal their families and livestock. Jacob said their anger was "fierce."

> "fierce" — az — *"(strong) (vehement)* ***harsh****: (fierce) + (greedy) (mighty) (power) (roughly) strong"* (Strong); *"strong, mighty, fierce"* (BDB); *"An adjective meaning strong, powerful, insolent. When referring to a person's attitude of anger or wrath, it means insolent, excessive, fierce"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 817).

Jacob said their wrath was "cruel."

> "cruel" — qashah — *"properly to be (dense), i.e., tough or severe: be (cruel) be (fiercer) make (grievous)"* (Strong); *"to be hard, be severe, be fierce, be harsh"* (BDB); *"A verb meaning to be hard; to be hardened, stiff-necked. It indicates that something is difficult, hard, cruel, severe, harsh"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1019).

What did they do in their "anger" and "wrath?" The KJV says they "digged down a wall;" whereas the ASV and NKJV both say they "hocked (hamstrung) an ox." When an animal was hamstrung, a tendon was cut in its legs, which made it useless for work; it could no longer be used to plough or pull a wagon, et cetera.

Jacob further said, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Regarding the descendants of Simeon, as one looks to the future, they basically were absorbed into Judah and thus lost their tribal land — no longer being considered a separate tribe.

> *"At the time of the conquest of Canaan, Simeon had become the smallest of the tribes of Israel (Numbers 26:14).The tribe was passed over in the blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33). It received no separate assignment of territory, but merely a few cities within the limits of Judah*

(Joshua 19:1-9). Those were absorbed into Judah; and those who remained emigrated in two detachments, and sought out settlements for themselves outside the limits of Canaan (1 Chronicles 4:27-43)" (Coffman, p. 565).

When one considers Levi, he sees a slightly different scene. His descendants were scattered throughout the tribes of Israel in priestly cities (48), including the six cities of refuge. They were made the spiritual tribe of Israel, attending to the Tabernacle/Temple, as well as other religious activities. They became the priestly tribe, i.e., the tribe through whom the priests and High Priest would come. This may have come about because of their actions in Exodus 32. One remembers that the setting was Moses' receiving the law on Mount Sinai, while the people were going back to idolatry in the camp. When Moses asked the people who was on the Lord's side, all of the Levites joined him, and carried out the orders to slay those who had been involved in this idolatry.

Gen. 49:8-10 "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

> "Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise: Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies; Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, he couched as a lion, And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come: And unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be." (ASV)

After giving "negative" blessings to his first three sons, Jacob turned to Judah. Leupold believed that Judah and Joseph shared the normal blessing of the firstborn, in that Joseph received the double portion, while Judah received the leadership which would normally have gone to the firstborn. When looking back, one sees that it was Judah who suggested that Joseph should be sold as a slave so they could make a little money and get rid of him at the same time. What redeemed Judah so that he would be reverenced by his brethren and Jacob? Surely by the time of these blessings, Jacob knew the whole story. Could it be

when he offered himself as the slave to take Benjamin's place when they stood before Joseph?

"thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise" There would be a number of reasons why Judah would be praised. But in the immediate context, it will be because of the many military victories GOD will give through Judah. This tribe took the lead in the journey through the wilderness and in defending the nation as a whole. This is borne out in the next phrase of verse eight. "thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies" At first glance, one might picture someone choking his enemy, but consider the original word here, which signifies grabbing an enemy by the back of the neck as he was fleeing.

"neck" — oreph — *"the nape or back of the neck (as declining)"* (Strong); *"neck, back of the neck, back"* (BDB); *"A masculine noun meaning neck; back. It refers to the back of a person's neck or a neck in general"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 874).

The picture then is of an enemy who is being pursued by Judah and caught by him from behind.

"thy father's children shall bow down before thee" This is bowing in recognition of his leadership, courage and strength in battle. It would also seem to indicate a willingness to follow Judah's leadership because of his prowess.

"Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up" Verse nine shows a vivid picture of Judah's prowess as a tribe of warriors. The "lion's whelp" is not a picture of a very young lion, for he is returning from the prey. In watching the animal channel, one learns that it takes close to a year before lion, tiger, and leopard cubs learn to hunt successfully. This is speaking of a lion which is strong and able to conquer its prey. The picture shows a lion who has been successful and has eaten his prey rising up and returning to its den where it "stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" He lays down in peace to sleep after conquering his prey.

"stooped" — kawrah — *"a primitive root; to bend the knee; by implication to (sink) to prostrate"* (Strong); *"to bend. Kneel, bow, bow down, sink down to one's knees, kneel down to rest (of animals), kneel in reference"* (BDB); *"A verb meaning to bow. The word signifies the crouching of a lion before going to sleep"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 527).

"couched" — rabats — *"a primitive root; to*

crouch [on all four legs (folded) like a recumbent animal]; by implication to recline, repose" (Strong); *"to stretch oneself out, lie down, lie stretched out"* (BDB); *"a verb meaning to lie down, to rest; to lay something down"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1032).

The phrase "who shall rouse him" seems to imply who would dare to bother him at this point. He is mature. He knew how to handle himself and, when roused, can become quickly valiant and ferocious.

"The figure of a lion as a symbol of bold strength and courage is common throughout history, even till the days of Richard the Lionhearted of England" (Coffman, p. 566).

To the Hebrew mind, verse ten has always been considered a Messianic passage. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah" states that the ruler of the nation will always be from the tribe of Judah.

"this did not come to pass at once. Moses was from Levi, Joshua from Ephraim, Gideon from Manasseh, Samson from Dan, Samuel from Ephraim, and Saul from Benjamin" (Coffman, p. 566).

The first king of Israel was from Benjamin (Saul), but from that time on, its rulers would all be from the tribe of Judah.

"Scepter. This is reference to a rod or stick or gavel that a man of power and authority would wield" (Zerr, p. 102).

But note that this was going to end someday. "nor a lawgiver from between his feet, **until** Shiloh come." Note the term "lawgiver." **The law** had been given by someone of another tribe, namely Moses from the tribe of Levi. This writer believes that this is a prophecy that a new law would be given, and that it would be given by the One known as Shiloh.

"Shiloh" — shiyloh — *"tranquil; an epithet of the Messiah"* (Strong); *"he whose it is, that which belongs to him, tranquility"* (BDB); *"A masculine proper name meaning Shiloh. It is a noun meaning whose it is or he whose it is"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 1132).

What will this lawgiver do? "unto him shall the gathering of the people be" When this lawgiver came, He would deliver a law which would draw people from every nation to Him.

"For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:8).

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32).

"The verse is a beautiful prediction of the coming of Christ to become a law giver and ruler and that people will then gather to him and not to Moses" (Zerr, p. 102).

Gen. 49:11-12 "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

"Binding his foal unto the vine, And his ass's colt unto the choice vine; He hath washed his garments in wine, And his vesture in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, And his teeth white with milk." (ASV)

These two verses are highly figurative, showing the prosperity of the tribe of Judah. The land will abundantly produce, and a good supply of food helps make for a healthy and strong population.

Gen. 49:13 "Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon."

"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; And he shall be for a haven of ships; And his border shall be upon Sidon." (ASV)

Zidon was a city with a great harbor for ships.

Zebulon's borders were very near the city, but did not reach to the Mediterranean, as the KJV implies. The reading should be "toward" Zidon which was a "haven of the sea." Zebulon's border to the east did not extend quite to the Sea of Galilee, but they were in perfect position regarding the trade routes between Zidon and northern Israel. It appears that Zebulon was heavily involved in trade from sea-faring people. There are those who believe their borders indeed reached these two seas, and since one does not know exactly where these borders were, it may indeed be the case that they did reach these shores. It is not known why Jacob skipped over Issachar, was the fifth son of Jacob and Leah, giving Zebulon a blessing before blessing Issachar.

Grasham shows that though they did not border the two seas, yet there was a major river which ran through their land to the Mediterranean Sea. The River Kishon would thus have provided a major source of trade for them, and for the rest of Israel through them.

We also know that the warriors of Zebulon helped drive out the Canaanites and were praised by Deborah for their efforts in Judges 5. Also, they helped drive the Midianites out in the time of Gideon.

Gen. 49:14-15 "Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

> "Issachar is a strong ass, Couching down between the sheepfolds: And he saw a resting-place that it was good, And the land that it was pleasant; And he bowed his shoulder to bear, And became a servant under taskwork." (ASV)

"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens"

> *"The points of resemblance designed to be indicated by this image were all good qualities — patience, docility, a capacity of great labor and endurance, associated with strength and activity"* (JFB, p. 268).

Issachar is thus pictured as strong and productive, yet the people had a flaw and it appears to be laziness.

They "became a servant unto tribute;" the NKJV says they *"became a band of slaves."*

> *"The thing in view here is the character of Issachar whose tribe would be satisfied with physical comfort and plenty to eat, with a complacency that would make them prefer to accept oppression and taskwork rather than fight*

to maintain freedom and independence" (Coffman, p. 570).

"Instead of fighting against their enemies and trusting God's promise of victory in the Promised Land, they chose submission and a life of mere existence, as though they were pack animals forced to serve their pagan masters" (Grasham, p. 583).

Gen. 49:16-17 "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward."

> "Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, An adder in the path, That biteth the horse's heels, So that his rider falleth backward." (ASV)

The tribe of Dan was originally assigned land on the western side of Judah. But they were dissatisfied with their portion and sought out land in the northern region of Canaan. Dan was not known for being spiritually strong. In fact, the descendants of Dan began abandoning the GOD of Israel early in the time of the Judges, introducing idolatry into the tribes.

> *"the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of GOD was in Shiloh"* (Judges 18:30-31).

It was also in Dan that Jeroboam set up one of the two golden calves [the other was set up in Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-30)]. It is observed in the book of Revelation that the tribe of Dan name is not mentioned in that list of tribes (The Revelation 7:4-8).

With regard to judging the tribes, it hardly seems possible that their morality would render them capable of such. Yet, Samson, with his many faults, was one of the judges of Israel (Judges 13ff), whom GOD used to bring His vengeance upon the Philistines.

The adder is a deadly snake which tends to blend in with the soil in which it is found, much like the copper-head in America. This may symbolize Dan's cunning in battle against the foes of Israel, because Israel did not do battle on horses or with chariots until the times of Solomon. The rider being thrown from the horse's back may also show the ability of Dan to overthrow its

enemies. One might also consider the deadly adder's suddenly striking the unsuspecting victim, who quickly dies from its poison, with the actions of Dan in conquering the land they eventually dwelt in (Laish, Judges 19). In about 722 B.C., the Assyrians carried them into captivity, from which as a tribe, they never came home.

Gen. 49:18 "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD."

"I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah." (ASV)

"salvation" – yeshuah — *"deliverance"* (Strong); *"salvation, deliverance"* (BDB); *"help, deliverance, salvation, victory, welfare"* (Zodhiates).

"The word itself is the Hebrew yeshuah, which none other than the name 'Jesus'. This becomes even the more significant when it is realized that here we have the first mention of the word 'salvation' in the Bible" (Morris, p. 658).

It is noted that, in all of the works from which this author read, Morris is the only one which says this word is the word "Jesus."

This passage has perplexed scholars for a long time because of its placement, but also for its significance. Is this a prayer to GOD which declared how Jacob had patiently waited for salvation? Is it a prayer for the tribes as they will face many difficulties in the years to come? Is it a declaration of the faith that Jacob has in GOD, i.e., that He will deliver on His promises both physical and spiritual?

Gen. 49:19 "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last."

"Gad, a troop shall press upon him; But he shall press upon their heel." (ASV)

"troop" — gedud — *"a crowd (especially of soldiers): troop of robbers"* (Strong); *"a band, troop, marauding band"* (BDB); "this word means cut, furrow; collection of warriors, troop of soldiers, army, band (of men), company, plunderers, scouring party, attack. Generally, this noun describes a marauding military raid. Men engaging in such activity could have even been mercenaries or looters" (Zodhiates).

"overcome" — gud — *"to crowd (upon), i.e.,*

attack: (invade) overcome" (Strong); *"to invade, attack"* (BDB); *"a verb meaning to attack, to overcome, to invade"* (Baker/Carpenter, p. 192).

"last" — aqeb iqqebah — *"a heel...figuratively the rear (of an army)"* (Strong); *"heel, rear, footprint, hinder part, hoof, rear of a troop, footstep"* (BDB); *"It is a protuberant, a heel; of horses; a step, a footprint; the extreme rear of an army"* (Zodhiates).

The tribe of Gad was often attacked by its neighbors and bands of marauders, as is attested to in Judges chapters ten and eleven. From the first book of Chronicles, it is learned that the Gadites were courageous fighters, which they needed to be to repel the many attacks they would suffer. It should be remembered that they asked Moses for the right to settle on the east bank of the Jordan River, and their territory bordered the Ammonites. They would also have been subject to attacks by the Arabians and Midianites To a certain extent, they acted as a buffer for the tribes on the west side of Jordan.

"In the blessing of Moses, they are described as being ferocious like a lion (Deut. 33:20-21)" (Grasham, p. 586).

"The word concerning Gad amounts to this: though he be pressed hard, he in turn presses hard upon those that assail him" (Leupold, p. 1190).

The last part of verse nineteen is better translated in the ASV — "But he shall press upon their heel." It seems to this writer that Gad could be described by a boxing term — he was a good counter-puncher. Another idea comes to mind, and that is fire ants. In Georgia, there are a lot of these pesky little ants. When their mound is disturbed, they immediately swarm out of it to protect their domain. Gad seems to have been of that nature.

Gen. 49:20 "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties."

"Out of the Asher his bread shall be fat, And he shall yield royal dainties." (ASV)

The land Asher inhabited was rich and grew bountiful crops. When Moses blessed this tribe he said, "let him dip his foot in oil" (Deuteronomy 33:24), which indicates the rich olive oil which would flow from the crops. Its land bordered the seacoast north of Mount Carmel. Some believe the text means that the people

of Asher were able to produce so much that they had large abundances. If that were the case, then it can be seen that they would have been very prosperous. Others believe that the passage is speaking of their ability to produce food fit for a king.

Unfortunately the tribe of Asher decided to disobey GOD's command to drive out or destroy the inhabitants of the land.

> "the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out" (Judges 1:32).

Thus, spiritually they were shown to have a great weakness, choosing rather to mingle with the Canaanites and the influence their false gods would have on them. Deborah appears to criticize the tribe of Asher for not helping his brethren (Ephraim) when Sisera and his forces attacked them.

> "Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches" (Judges 5:17).

Instead of standing and fighting, Asher seems to have been a compromiser, and a compromiser with GOD's enemies **always** loses in the end.

Gen. 49:21 "Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."

> "Naphtali is a hind let loose: He giveth goodly words." (ASV)

> *"Naphtali is described as a hind (deer or gazelle depending on the source) let loose: swift and nimble. Yet his nimbleness is not only found in his actions as he is one capable of beautiful words"* (Cozort, p. 237).

Either of these animals (deer or gazelle) is set free by its swiftness; that is, it gains freedom because of its swiftness. This may refer to the swiftness of foot exhibited by the Naphtalites in battle, which would give them victory and maintain their freedom.

From Judges 1:33, it is learned that Naphtali did not follow GOD's directions and left some of the inhabitants in the land. Instead, these Canaanites were forced to give tribute to Naphtali.

> "Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them."

Gen. 49:22-24 "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty GOD of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)"

> "Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a fountain; His branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, And shot at him, and persecute him: But his bow abode in strength, And the arms of his hands were made strong, By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, (From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel)," (ASV)

Blessings for Joseph's descendants are now given in beautiful flowing language. Joseph's descendants will prosper as did he in the imagery of a fruitful vine, i.e., one which produced much fruit. It seems that the imagery is of a vine which spreads out, not being restrained, and is thus able to produce much fruit. Such a vine could not exist without abundant resources of nutrients and water — fertile land.

> "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3).

Verse twenty-three appears to be a direct reference to Joseph himself, and yet history will also show the conflicts to which Ephraim and Manasseh would be subject. Joseph's direct enemies are portrayed with the imagery of being shot at by archers (his brothers). They had hated him and tried to destroy him, yet he had prevailed — not by his own prowess, but by the mighty hand of GOD.

Though Joseph's enemies tried their best to destroy him, he remained strong through his faith in GOD. GOD strengthened him, and he was able to overcome all of them.

"the mighty GOD of Jacob" This reminds one of the loving care GOD had given to Jacob. Through all of his trials, GOD was always there and able to help him.

> "I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (Isaiah

49:26).

Gen. 49:25-26 "Even by the GOD of thy father, Who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

> "Even by the GOD of thy father, Who shall help thee, And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee, With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath, Blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. The blessings of thy father Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (ASV)

Emphasis is again noted that it is the "GOD of thy father, Who shall help you," through Whom all these blessings will be bestowed. Joseph is reminded that it is "the Almighty" (El Shadday) Who cared for him and has protected him all these years.

Two blessings are next described, the first of which is, "who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under." This would include the rains and underground sources of water which would be needed for fruitful crops. As the crops are fruitful, so also will be his descendants, as the second part of this blessing shows. "blessings of the breasts, and of the womb" Joseph had indeed been blessed with two sons with Asenath, but his descendants would also be blessed with great fertility. This blessing probably also extends to the herds and flocks which they would have. When the land produces well, the opportunity exists for abundance of animals.

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills" Joseph is then shown that GOD had begun the process of causing them to become a mighty nation. Jacob himself had been blessed with twelve sons, but those from which he came (Abraham and Isaac) had only produced one each of the children of promise. Truly Jacob had been blessed with many sons, and Joseph's descendants would be blessed with the same.

Gen. 49:27 "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

> "Benjamin is a wolf that raveneth: In the morning she shall devour the prey, And at even he shall divide the spoil." (ASV)

> *"The warlike nature of the small tribe of Benjamin became well known, as exhibited in their archers and slingers (Judges 20:16; 1 Chron. 8:40; 12:2; 2 Chron. 14:8; 17:17) and in the brazen defenses of their wickedness in Gibeah (Judges 19; 20). Both Sauls in the Bible were from this tribe: the first king in Israel (1 Sam. 9:1-2) and the apostle Paul (Phil. 3:5)"* (MacArthur, p. 77).

> *"Benjamin is likened to a ravenous wolf which plunders by night and devours the prey by morning light"* (Smith, p. 227).

It should be remembered that, next to Joseph, Benjamin was the beloved son of Jacob, having been the only other child given to him by his beloved Rachel.

The picture being drawn is of a tribe which will be accomplished and vicious warriors. This is a tribe which will not back down from anyone. There is also a gentler side of Benjamin shown in that "at night he shall divide the spoil." He will take care of his own in providing for them.

A good example of the ferociousness of this tribe is seen in Judges chapter three. There Ehud repelled the Moabites by killing their king, Eglon (He is sometimes referred to as *"Ehud, the left-handed dagger man."*).

Gen. 49:28 "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them."

> "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them." (ASV)

Jacob finished the blessings given to his sons. It should be remembered that he was speaking prophetically, GOD showing him the general picture of the generations to come as it related to his sons. Notice particularly that he called them the "twelve tribes of Israel." He was designating them as twelve parts of a nation, much like one today would say the fifty states of America. He clearly now referred to them as a nation for the first time in the Scriptures.

"They are the banner of God hanging over them,

when faithful to him. The lion-might of Judah, of Gad, and of Dan, Ephraim's horns of power, the swift energy of Benjamin, could be put forth on each occasion as strength which God had pledged to them" (Pusey as quoted by JFB, p. 271).

Consider that each son received a blessing which was appropriate to him. But involved in those blessing are what are called curses. These pointed out weaknesses which were to be overcome by these tribes. Critics would point to the curses, but it should be remembered that none of them were disinherited because of their faults. Instead, they were warned about them so that correction could be made, and if it was not, then of course the consequences of such would be exacted upon them. They were the twelve tribes of Israel.

Gen. 49:29-30 "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace."

> "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place." (ASV)

Jacob gave one last charge to all his sons, which he had already given to Joseph earlier (47:31). Regarding his death, there are two different things being addressed here. "I am to be gathered unto my people" is a declaration that there is life after death, and that when he died, he would be gathered at that time to his people in Sheol. The burial would take place at a later date and would also be a declaration — a declaration of faith that he, like Abraham and Isaac, believed the testimony of GOD that their descendants would be given this land. With his dying breath, he told them to bury his body in the cave of Machpelah, where his ancestors had been buried.

Gen. 49:31-33 "There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.

And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

> "there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah: the field and the cave that is therein, which was purchased from the children of Heth. And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." (ASV)

Verse thirty-one is a rehearsal of the family which was already buried in the cave of Machpelah. Observe that it was Abraham and his first wife — Sarah; Isaac and his only wife — Rebekah; and Leah, who was Jacob's first wife. Jacob's body would soon join theirs. Jump ahead to verse thirty-three, where it is found that Jacob "yielded up the ghost" (spirit left his body) — he died. Note carefully the next words — "and was gathered unto his people." It is clear that Israel was gathered to his people immediately after his death, i.e., to the realm of the dead — Sheol. This is further verified in the next chapter, when it is seen that his body was embalmed, which took forty days. Further, the Egyptians mourned him for seventy days. Even if these two events took place at the same time, it would have been at least three months before his body would have joined the bodies of his ancestors at Machpelah. If they took place consecutively, then his body would not have been buried for about seven months.

Genesis — Chapter Fifty

Gen. 50:1-3 "And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days."

> "And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of embalming: and the Egyptians wept for him three-score and ten days." (ASV)

Death indeed will cause sorrow, and appropriately Joseph expressed that sorrow when Jacob died. But the day is coming when there will be no more tears because of separation.

"GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;

> and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (The Revelation 21:4).

Further, it should be noted that Joseph did not weep as would those without hope of a future reunion. He knew that someday the faithful would be reunited.

> "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

If one remembers the prophecy of Genesis 46:4, he sees why Joseph fell on his face and kissed him — he would be present to close his father's eyes in death.

The embalming process is described by Leupold in his commentary on page 1205 of volume two, and is offered here for consideration.

> *"The process of embalming, described already in some detail by Herodotus, involved the removal of the brain through the nose by a hooked instrument as well as the removal of the entrails through an incision in the side made with a sharp stone knife. The entrails were placed in a jar. The cranial cavity was filled with spices, likewise the abdominal cavity; but it as well as the entire body were thoroughly treated with salt-peter for seven days. Afterward the whole body was washed with a palm wine. Then it was daubed with pitch or gums, swathed in many folds of white cloth and laid away in its mummy case."*

Dummelow added that, after the body was filled with spices, it *"was then steeped in a mixture of salt and soda (called natron), for forty days, or more days, to preserve it from decay"* (p. 46). Luther, in his writings, said that there is no other burial in Scripture which matches the detail and honor involved in Jacob's funeral and preparations for it.

Due to the high regard the Egyptians had for Joseph, they mourned his father for a full seventy days. This writer believes that included the time needed for embalming. It will be noted that when Joseph buried his father in Canaan, the Egyptians sent a large delegation of high officials and mourned with the family again.

There is one other interesting thing about the preparations of Jacob's body mentioned here — the mummification was done by Joseph's physicians. There is a high probability that this was done because

Joseph worshipped the GOD of Heaven and earth. When the Egyptians mummified someone's body, there were many incantations recited during the process to their gods. It was a religious proceeding. But Joseph did not follow the ordinary process of having the embalmers prepare Jacob. He commanded his physicians to do it. The body needed to be protected from decay in the long mourning process as well as the long journey later to Canaan.

Gen. 50:4-6 "And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear."

> "And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear." (ASV)

One might wonder why Joseph himself did not make the request of these verses. The answer lies in the fact that, in mourning, he was not considered fit to stand before Pharaoh.

It is believed by some that this may have been a new Pharaoh which was on the throne. Joseph showed him proper respect and assured him that he would return after the proper time of burial was completed.

Gen. 50:7-11 "And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. And when the inhabitants of the

land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan."

> "And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and there they lamented with a very great and sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan." (ASV)

This funeral procession was not a small one, in fact it was very large, and it was what today would be called a "State Funeral." It should also be considered that this was a journey of about three hundred miles, no easy or quick trip in those times. The fathers of both Israel and Egypt were in attendance, i.e., the leaders of the highest order. The military was involved, as horsemen and chariots are seen. Their primary purpose would no doubt have been to protect Joseph, as well as the dignitaries which were with him.

In the book, Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, Josephus stated that this funeral was accomplished *"at great expense"* (p. 74). At last they arrived at the "threshingfloor of Atad," where another official mourning took place for seven days. It should be observed that this time of mourning was not done just by the Israelites — the Egyptians were just as involved as the Israelites.

The mourning was so great that the Canaanites (general term for all the inhabitants of the land, regardless of nationality) observed it and named the place "Abelmizraim."

Abel mitsrayim — *"meadow of Egypt"* (Strong, Thayer).

Gen. 50:12-13 "And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre."

> "And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which

Abraham bought with the field, for a possession of a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre." (ASV)

What these verses show is that the sons of Israel did to the letter what he had told them to do about his burial. There is much speculation by commentators with regard to the actions of the Egyptians here. Some say they did not cross over Jordan and allowed Joseph and his brothers to go bury Jacob's body. Others think the Egyptians left them at this point and went home (verse fourteen denies this). The fact is that the Scriptures do not state what they did, but one thing this author believes can be deduced is that these soldiers (chariots and horsemen) would not have left such an important official such as Joseph unprotected.

Gen. 50:14 "And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father."

"And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father." (ASV)

This verse shows that the entire party which went to Machpelah returned to Egypt together.

Gen. 50:15-21 "And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the GOD of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of GOD? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but GOD meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

"And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a message unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin, for that they did unto thee evil. And

now, we pray thee, forgive the transgression of the servants of the GOD of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of GOD? And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but GOD meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." (ASV)

Before considering these verses, one needs to go back in time to Genesis 45:1-11, to the time when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. On that occasion, he showed that he was not interested in revenge for what they had done to him. Instead, he informed them that GOD had used what they had done to save them and their families. He further told them to move to Egypt, where he would take care of them.

Now the time has come when Jacob has died and been buried, and the brothers were fearful that Joseph had been waiting for this time to take vengeance on them. Note that instead of immediately appearing before him, they sent a messenger to relay their thoughts and petitions. This would have been the right thing to do out of respect for his high office. They experienced the guilty sensations that many sinners have in believing that GOD may not forgive them (even when He has said He would) when they have met the conditions for forgiveness. In fact, they had not met the conditions GOD has set for forgiveness. When Genesis 45 is viewed, it is noted that they had not asked for Joseph's forgiveness, according to the Scriptures. One cannot have forgiveness of his sins without asking for forgiveness.

"**If** we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, emphasis mine, RK).

Note that the brothers finally asked Joseph to forgive them for their sins against him.

"now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the GOD of thy father"

They underestimated Joseph in believing he could not and did not forgive them. They underestimated this pious man. But further, Jacob is also seen to have underestimated him, because he gave a command for Joseph to forgive them on his death bed.

When the messenger finished his message, the Scriptures simply state that "Joseph wept." Why did Joseph weep? Was it because he was finally hearing

the confession of his brothers? This writer thinks not. This writer believes Joseph was showing grief because his brothers thought he was the kind of man who could say he forgave and yet prepare for a time of vengeance.

"To have sincere motives questioned is painful" (Leupold, p. 1216).

It seems that there are many today who are just like Joseph's brothers in their consideration of GOD's forgiveness. They were attributing an evil, unforgiving heart to Joseph.

It is obvious from studying the context of these events that they were sorry for what they had done (Genesis 45ff). But being sorry is not the same as repentance, nor is it the same as confession and asking for forgiveness. Their repentance was shown to be genuine and complete by their asking for his forgiveness. Seventeen years had passed. Why did it take so long? Was it pride? Was it simply the idea of *"letting old dogs lie?"* Possibly they reasoned that, as long as Jacob was alive, Joseph would not do anything to them. But now, their old fears and feelings of guilt came back to haunt them.

The messenger had relayed their message (Was the messenger perhaps Benjamin?) and their requests, and now the brothers came before him. They did just as Joseph's dreams had predicted. They prostrated themselves before him, as they had done before and probably many times since. Further, they declared that they were his "servants."

> "servants" — ebed — *"a servant: bondage, bondman, bond servant"* (Strong); *"slave, servant, man-servant, subjects"* (BDB); "It is a laborer, a servant, a slave, a man in bonds, a subject" (Zodhiates).

Joseph's answer to them was "Fear not: for am I in the place of GOD?" If vengeance was going to be taken for their actions, it was not going to come from Joseph. Further, how could Joseph have taken vengeance on them, when GOD had used their actions to save them? It simply was not Joseph's place to take vengeance on them.

> "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

> "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall

come upon them make haste" (Deuteronomy 32:35).

In verse twenty, Joseph reminded them that all of this was GOD's doing. GOD had brought Joseph to Egypt to save His chosen people. There is of course another purpose which has been spoken of in the past in this commentary. They needed to be a separated people, and in Egypt this was accomplished. Unlike Canaan, their occupation made them a despised people, one which the Egyptians by and large would avoid. This is a remarkable text which shows the providence of GOD. GOD did not make Joseph antagonize his brothers in Canaan. He did not make his brothers sell Joseph to the Midianites. He did not make the Midianites sell Joseph to Potiphar or make Potiphar promote him to the head of his household. He did not make Potiphar's wife try to seduce Joseph or cause him to be placed in prison. GOD overruled all of the evil done to Joseph to accomplish His goal.

Finally, Joseph reassured them that he fully intended to care for them and their families. Then he "comforted them." Leupold says the Hebrew says, *"he spoke to their hearts"* (p. 1217).

Gen. 50:22-26 "And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and GOD will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, GOD will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

> "And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were born upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but GOD will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, GOD will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (ASV)

Joseph had been made second to Pharaoh and held that position for eighty years. During that time, not only

had Egypt flourished, but so had Israel. During his life, he was privileged to see his great-great grandchildren.

Finally, Joseph's days on this earth came to an end. But before he died, he revealed his great faith in the promises which had been given to Abraham. He told his brethren that they were to take his bones when they left Egypt and bury them in Canaan.

> *"It is evident from his dying injunction, that he had not allowed himself to be immersed with the politics, the honors, or the pleasures of a foreign and heathen capital as to obliterate memory of, or shake his faith in, the Divine promises to Israel"* (JFB, p. 273).

> *"By laying it upon his people he gave eloquent testimony to his faith in God's promises, and by leaving his body in their midst he gave them a continual reminder of that gracious promise"* (Leupold, p. 1,220).

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